THE DR WHO

annual 1979

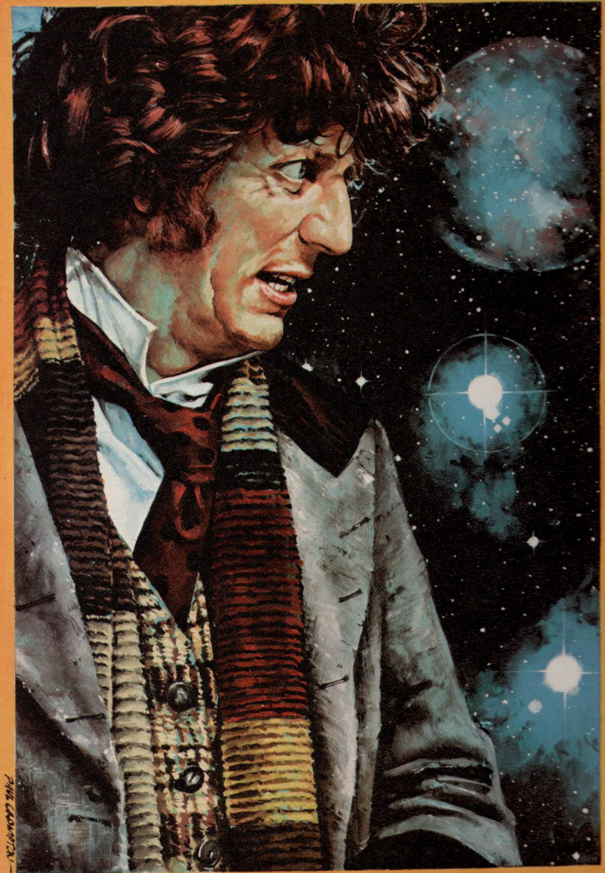
Starring
TOM BAKER
as DR WHO

Authorised edition
as seen on
BBC tv

THE DR WHO

annual 1979

SBN 7235 0491 1


PAUL CROMPTON

THE DR WHO annual 1979

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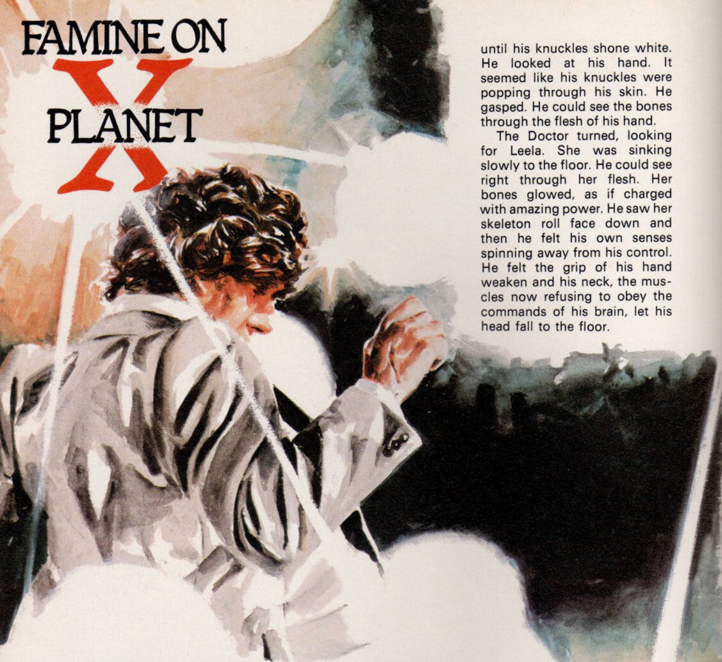
FAMINE ON PLANET X



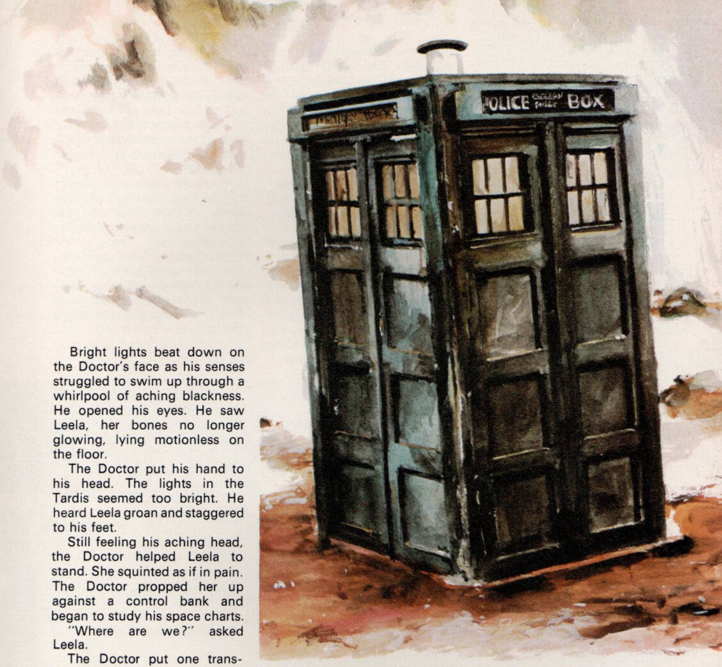
The cosmic storm could not have struck at a worse time. The Tardis was plunging through the twin vortexes of time and space, and the Doctor was lying on his back in the middle of the room, a puzzled frown on his face as he stared up into the electrical entrails of the central control panel. His eye lit upon a small glass phial surrounded by a faint blue glow. He cursed himself in disgust.

"Of course! How stupid of me! I forgot to refill the Actualising filter with Essence of Vallo. We'll never appear where we thought we would now."

He was chewing his thumbnail and still pondering the problem when the first waves of the storm struck. The inside of the Tardis shook violently and glowed red, then yellow, then red again. Leela looked around her with wild eyes, her hand on her dagger, backing nervously towards the wall like a threatened animal.

The Tardis began spinning. The Doctor grabbed hold of a leg of a chair and hung on tight. The red glow turned to a violent electric blue. An aura of untamed energy filled the ship. The Doctor tightened his grip until his knuckles shone white. He looked at his hand. It seemed like his knuckles were popping through his skin. He gasped. He could see the bones through the flesh of his hand.

The Doctor turned, looking for Leela. She was sinking slowly to the floor. He could see right through her flesh. Her bones glowed, as if charged with amazing power. He saw her skeleton roll face down and then he felt his own senses spinning away from his control. He felt the grip of his hand weaken and his neck, the muscles now refusing to obey the commands of his brain, let his head fall to the floor.



Bright lights beat down on the Doctor's face as his senses struggled to swim up through a whirlpool of aching blackness. He opened his eyes. He saw Leela, her bones no longer glowing, lying motionless on the floor.

The Doctor put his hand to his head. The lights in the Tardis seemed too bright. He heard Leela groan and staggered to his feet.

Still feeling his aching head, the Doctor helped Leela to stand. She squinted as if in pain. The Doctor propped her up against a control bank and began to study his space charts.

"Where are we?" asked Leela.

The Doctor put one transparent chart on top of another and traced a line with his finger.

"I don't know," he said, "it's only marked here by an X."

One moment the children of Rha were searching under rocks for some root or grub to ease their hunger and the next they were staring in wide-eyed astonishment across the grotesque landscape of their planet. The displaced atoms of the Tardis were regrouping in the shape of a police telephone box. Its appearance, seemingly out of nothing, left the children in awe, with the muscly, skin-covered tendons between their horns vibrating noisily.

The door to the Tardis opened and a tall figure emerged. It was wearing a long scarf and a wide brimmed hat. As the children cowered behind a rock another figure came out—smaller, with longer hair and dressed in animal skins.

The children of Rha exchanged glances. Should they risk meeting them? The hunger gnawed away at their insides. It had been six moons since they last ate, but they remembered the warnings their parents had given them about outsiders.

Finally Ogg could stand it no longer. He gestured with his tentacles for the others to remain in hiding, then he got up and walked towards the two strangers. Better that he, the eldest, should die trying to find food than that all of them should starve for their meekness.

The Doctor's first glimpse of Ogg startled him. He had seen many strange animals in his time, but the sight of this diminutive three-legged octopoid with massive horns seemed totally incongruous with the dry, orange, rock-strewn desert they were in. Ogg stopped in front of him, and the harp-like strands between his horns began changing. Strange shapes ran across them much as a loop travels along a skipping rope. The Doctor watched with undisguised fascination.

"Fantastic!" He muttered to himself.

"What is?" asked Leela.

"I do believe that these creatures communicate with those strands on their horns."

"Like . . . like . . ." Leela struggled to think exactly what it was like.

"Like living hieroglyphics formed through incredible instinctive muscle control. I wonder what he's saying?"

"I wonder what he's saying?" The Doctor was positively startled by Ogg's perfect imitation of his voice. He bent down and held out his hand.

"Hello, little fellow. Pleased to meet you."

Ogg's lips scarcely moved, but his mimicry was once again perfect.

"Hello, little fellow. Pleased to meet you."

The Doctor sighed and turned to Leela.

"He doesn't understand." The Doctor looked back to the strange symbols rippling between Ogg's vibrating horns. "Still, I suppose he'll have a better chance of learning our language than we'll have of deciphering that moving sign language on his head." He turned back to Ogg. "What can we do for you anyway?" He opened his hands in a gesture meant to convey his confusion and willingness to help.

Ogg pointed to his mouth.

"Food, eh?"

"Food, eh?" replied Ogg.

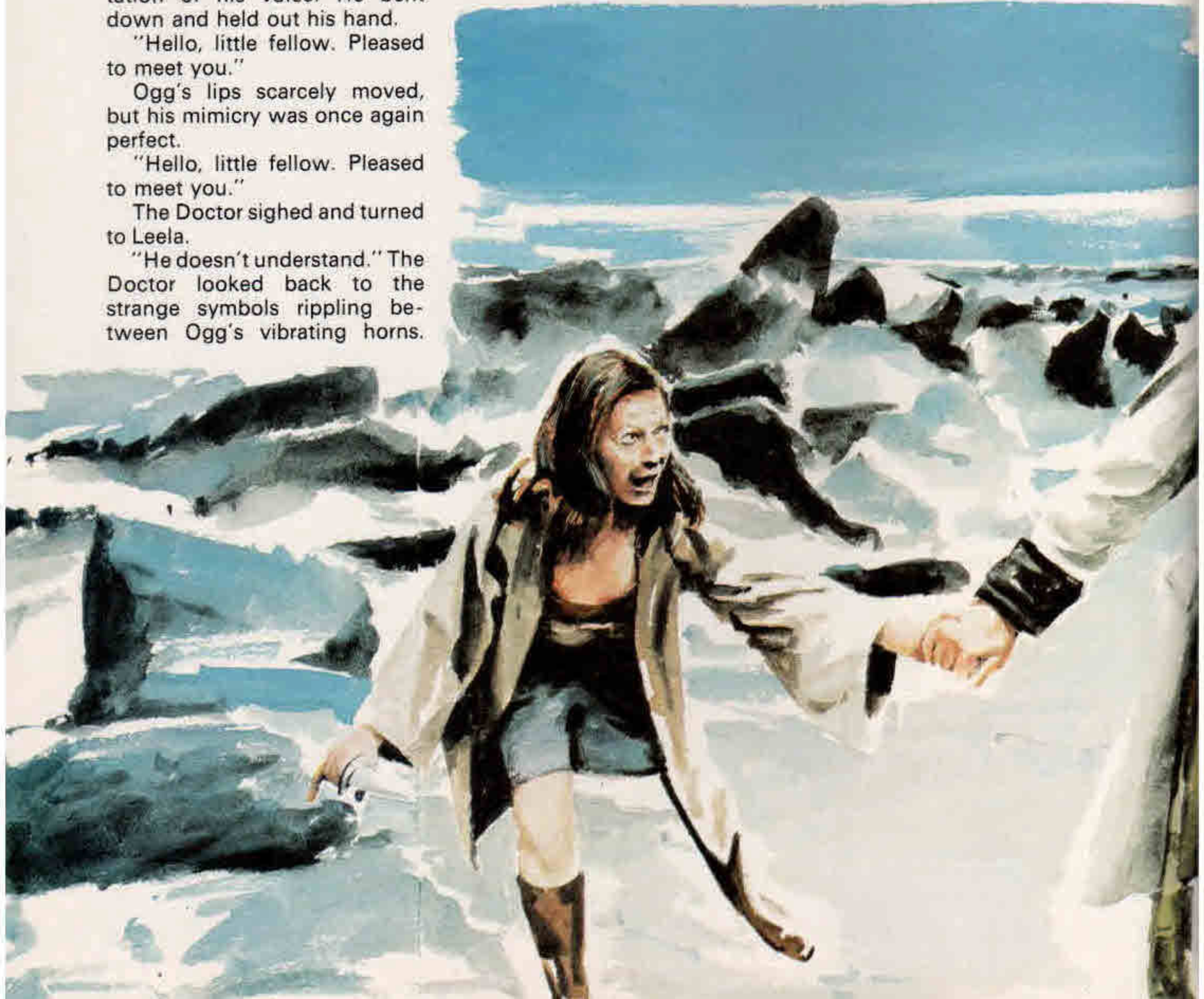
The Doctor fetched a bowl of water and a selection of fresh fruit from the Tardis and lay it down in front of Ogg. Ogg's uppermost tentacle snaked gingerly out and wrapped itself round a Marsuvian melon. He swallowed it whole. Leela and the Doctor watched and waited nervously for Ogg's reaction.

"FOOD, EH!" bellowed Ogg, and the strands between his horns began vibrating so fast the Doctor could not see them. Within minutes they were surrounded by eight other children of Rha, each one shouting, "Food, eh!" in a flawless reproduction of the Doctor's clipped, correct voice.

The Doctor brought out more melons and the children fed hungrily, each one of their single, bulbous eyes gleaming with glee.

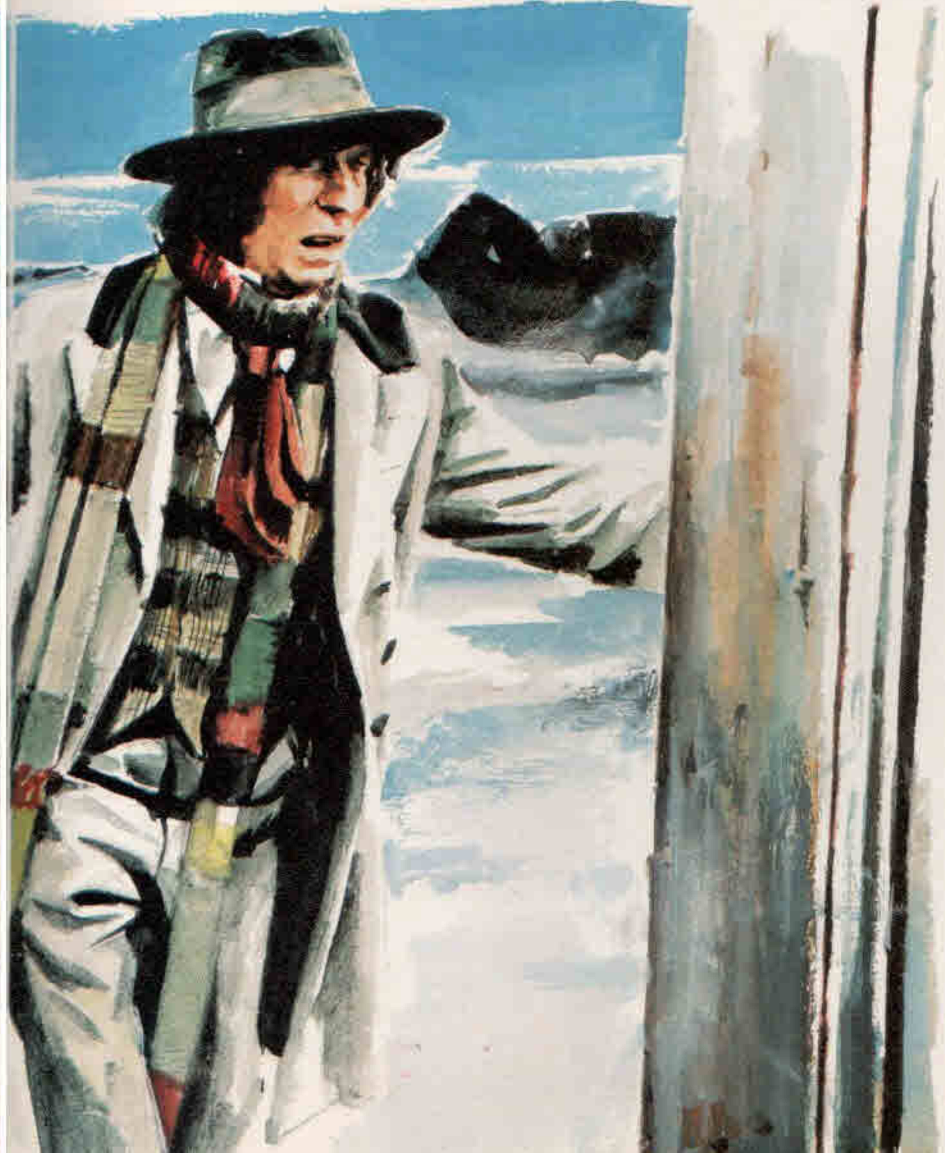
"I've often wondered why monoptic races are more capable of expression through their eyes than multoptic ones," the Doctor said, gazing into Ogg's grateful orb.

"Perhaps it is just an—what do you call it—



"An optical illusion? Never mind, it seems we've made friends with the natives at least. Now all we need is some Essence of Vallo and we can go."

A brilliant beam of white hot light lanced across the Doctor's shoulder and shattered a rock lying on the ground nearby. The Doctor dropped to the ground, pulling Leela down with him. He saw the tips of two horns dipping down behind a rock. He grabbed Leela's arm and made a dive for the Tardis's open doors. A second white hot lance of death hurtled into the door above their heads. They rolled inside and the Doctor activated the controls that shut the door. It was one time when he would have preferred the more conventional kind of door you just slam.



But once inside they were safe. Leela rested on the edge of a chair and the Doctor stood with his back to her, working the controls to the video screen.

"What do you think all that is about?" she asked.

"What do you think all that is about?"

"No need to repeat yourself, Leela." The Doctor was unhappy with the sudden attack.

"But I didn't," she protested.

"But I didn't. Food, eh?" The voice switched from Leela's to the Doctor's in the middle of the sentence. The Doctor and Leela peered over the top of the central control panel. Ogg stood there with his single eye brimming with light blue fluid.

"He must have sneaked in behind us."

Ogg stood there silently as a large teardrop of light blue fluid

splashed to the floor. A series of very clear symbols ran slowly across the tendons between his horns.

Leela's eyes started. "Peace!" she said.

"What?"

"Look! There it is again! Peace!" She pointed to a recurring symbol on Ogg's tendons.

"Peace?" asked the Doctor.

"Peace!" said Ogg in Leela's voice. "Peace?" he repeated in the Doctor's.

"When I was a child, my mother showed me a carving in a rock she said had been made by people from the sky. She said it was a sign of friendship, a sign of peace. He's trying to tell us he means us no harm!"

"Peace!" repeated Ogg, halting the symbol in the middle of each of his tendons.

The Doctor went back to his space charts. The nearest solar system he had visited was Elpax. He tried to remember the customs of the planets he had visited there, the legends and myths . . .

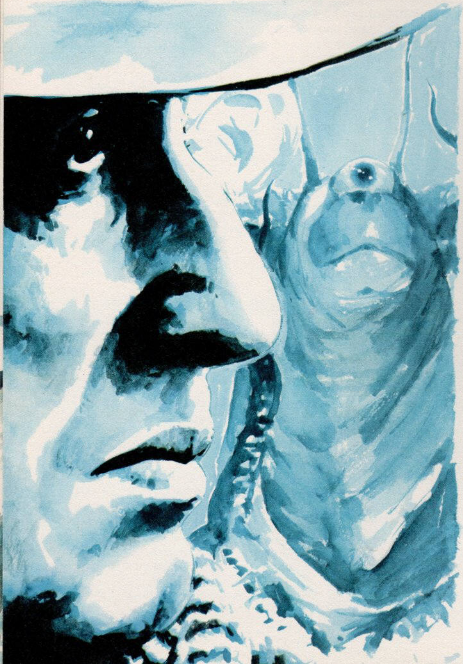
"Leela, you're a genius," he said distractedly as he pulled an ancient plasti-metal book down from a shelf and flicked through the thousands of super-thin pages. "What I said about living hieroglyphics wasn't too far out. Here!"

He spread the book on the table. The open pages were covered with thousands of strange symbols.

"The lost language of Apstle," he explained, "a nomadic race of philosophers and philanthropists. There are legends of them almost everywhere, but I've never been able to catch up with them myself." He found the star-shaped arrowhead symbol of peace and showed it to Ogg.

"Peace!" said Ogg, his one eye darting over the page, the flicker of recognition suddenly flaring into a joyful fire. He formed other symbols on the tendons between his horns and then pointed to them with his tentacle.

"Now we're getting somewhere," said the Doctor. He took the book from Ogg and put it back on the table. He lifted Ogg onto his knee and they pored over the book together, pointing at symbol after symbol. With painstaking slowness he began to learn the history of Planet X.



Ogg was the eldest of the children of Rha. He did not know where the language he used came from, only that the planet had been peaceful until the famine came. When the octopoids began to starve they blamed Rha, and said he had used magic to take away the crops. When the starving octopoids turned their wrath on Rha's children, Rha gave himself up as a sacrifice to their superstitions, hoping to show them how foolish they were being. But the famine continued and the octopoids began to persecute Rha's children. Ogg had led them away to try and scratch a living out of the desert, but the other octopoids had tracked them down, and now they had captured all of them but Ogg.

"What will they do to them?"

A simple, straight circle formed in the middle of Ogg's tendons. The Doctor searched the page until he found its meaning.

"Death!"

"Death!" Ogg confirmed.

The Doctor got to his feet and began rummaging in one of his storage cupboards. He brought out a box with a round glass globe on the top.

"Not if I can help it, young fellow," he said. "Leela, do you mind looking for that bag of seeds I brought with me from Lars? It's in the specimen tray."

Leela began searching for the bag of seeds and the Doctor switched a knob on the side of the box. The glass globe crackled with interference like that seen on the video screen. By carefully adjusting the knobs round the box, the Doctor was able to isolate a single wiggling white line. With some more delicate handling he managed to make the line still. He removed a small flat panel from the visual computers and attached wires from it to the box. He took out his cosmic screwdriver and drew the star-shaped arrowhead sign of peace on the panel. As he did so he flicked a switch and the white line in the globe looped upward, formed the shape and sent it running back and forward across the centre of the glass. The Doctor stood up, with the book under his arm,. and took the packet of seeds Leela offered him.

"Now, let's just hope they're willing to talk."

They weren't. As soon as the Doctor stepped out of the doors to the Tardis, the octopoids opened fire. Two beams bounced off the walls to the Tardis and the Doctor managed to deflect another with the plasti-metal book.

Leaving the glass globe behind, the Doctor ran a zig-zag course towards a large rock and leapt behind it. As the white hot beams from the octopoids' guns slammed into the rock, blowing large chunks into the air, the Doctor crouched down and opened his bag of seeds.

He took out three of the silver ovular-shaped seeds and spat on them. He counted up to twelve and then threw them towards an open space of desert close to where the octopoids were sheltering. Within a minute of their landing they began to sprout large, grey stalks. The stalks grew upward about two feet, split up and then began flowering. Dull red fruits swelled up near the middle of the flowers. The Doctor watched with a satisfied smile and said a quiet 'thank you' under his breath to the research scientists on Lars. He crouched further under cover and waited.

After several minutes, a single octopoid appeared, looking round with fear and wonder in his one eye. He scuttled up to the plant, pulled off a fruit with his tentacles and popped it in his mouth. The tendons between his horns started moving and soon he was joined by the other octopoids, who greedily pulled more of the fruit from the small tree.

While they were gorging themselves the Doctor made his way at a running crouch to where the children of Rha were being held. Skirting round rocks and racing across the open spaces, he reached the large rock he thought they were sheltering behind. Pushing his body close to the rock he edged round.

The octopoids had left only one of their number guarding the children of Rha, and he was staring longingly at the others, his gun hanging limp from his tentacles. The Doctor launched himself forward and struck it to the ground with the plasti-metal book. He slung the octopoid over his shoulder, and with the children of Rha hurrying after him, ran back to the Tardis. By the time the other octopoids noticed them Leela had activated the doors and they were rushing inside.

"Phew!" said the Doctor, plonking the struggling octopoid down and handing out the melons. The octopoid guard stared balefully at his captors. He watched the other children of Rha feeding hungrily and then, nervously at first, he ate.

The Doctor waited until the hatred in his eye died down, then he went over and began drawing on the panel. The line in the glass globe looped into life.

The Doctor pulled no punches. He left the octopoid in no doubt what would happen if he did not stop his fellows from persecuting anybody, and especially the children of Rha. He said he was going to give them crops that would grow, but that if they disobeyed him, he would stop them from growing. The Doctor didn't like using such crude emotional blackmail, but he was already planning to advise Ogg on how to de-fuse the myth once the octopoids were prospering again. He gave the octopoid the bag of seed from Lars, told him how to plant it and how to collect more seed from the fruit, then told him to go and join the others.

The children of Rha stood by the Doctor and Leela, their tentacles happily entwined, and watched through the video screen. The octopoid wriggled his tendons at the others and they all turned to the Tardis and waved their tentacles gratefully. Then they trooped off into the desert to plant the seeds.

Ogg and the children of Rha bade a long and tearful farewell to the Doctor and Leela. The Doctor knew that in Ogg, the octopoids of Planet X would have a fine, upstanding citizen, prepared to battle injustice. He watched them troop out of the Tardis, and then he crawled back under the central control panel.

"That's funny," he said, noting that the glow round the empty Vallo phial had changed from blue to red. "The phial is empty, yet this glow would indicate that it is perfectly operational."

He tried the controls. They worked.

"Amazing. It must be the energy bombardment from that cosmic storm, charging up the Tardis. I'll have to check this out when we land."

He flicked the master switch.

"Where are we going?" asked Leela, as lights began winking on and off all over the ship, and the hum of the Tardis rose again.

"Where do you fancy?" asked the Doctor. The Tardis began to dematerialise.

"I don't—oh, Doctor! Look! Quickly!"

The Doctor just had time to catch a quick glimpse before the Tardis entered non-space. Some freakish malfunction of the controls had taken them high above the desert on Planet X. Down below he could see that the octopoids had not planted the seeds in a line, but in a giant shape. The plants were flowering, and from the sky the shape was clearly visible—that of a star-shaped arrowhead. The Doctor returned to his controls with a smile.

"Peace."

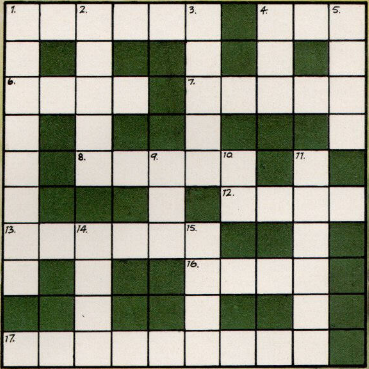
PUZZLE IT OUT

Clues Across:

1. Cumulus and cirrus are both ...... (6)
4. The ... Lords (3)
6. Second letter of the Greek alphabet (4)
7. Not below? (5)
8. The Giant ....., one of the Doctor's adversaries (5)
12. There are eleven members of a football one; nine members of a baseball one (4)
13. The Sun is our ultimate source of ...... (6)
16. Among (4)
17. A planet the Doctor will never forget, ... Three (9)

Clues Down:

1. The Doctor's enemies, they teamed up with the Vogans to attack a space station (8)
2. ..... space (5)
3. The place the Daleks call home (5)
4. The Doctor? (3)
5. To sway, and a Scottish dance tune! (4)
9. Soft marsh (3)
10. Abbreviation for Time Travellers? (2)
11. As the 'time and relative dimensions in space' mechanism is better known? (6)
14. Opposite of west (4)
15. American university, also a key (4)



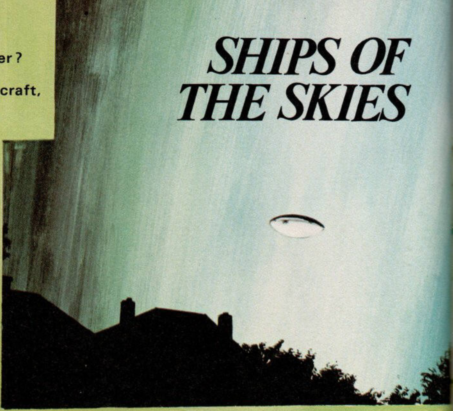
Answers

Across: 1. clouds; 4. war; 6. beta; 7. above; 8. robot; 12. team; 13. energy; 16. amid; 17. metebelis

Down: 1. cybermen; 2. outer; 3. skaro; 4. who; 5. reel; 9. bog; 10. tt; 11. tardis; 14. east; 15. yale

SHIPS OF THE SKIES

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a UFO? A flying saucer? No, it's a revolutionary new cargo and passenger craft, called a 'Skyship'.



Looking like someone's idea of a monster-size flying saucer, the Skyship is a British design, developed to succeed the Zeppelins and other inflatable airships which were abandoned after some terrible crashes and fires destroyed confidence in them.

The Skyship which eventually goes into service will be very large indeed, capable of carrying many tonnes of cargo and thousands of passengers. They are envisaged as being more than 200 metres across with a maximum thickness of more than 50 metres, and will weigh something between 600 and 800 tonnes. They will probably be disc or cigar-shaped, and will be as big as a 14-storey building!

The engines will be standard gas turbines (run on natural gas) which will run the huge propellers, and it is hoped that this will make the Skyship an economic success. The engines will enable the Skyship to travel at about 144 kilometres per hour, even fully loaded.

Although, of course, speeds like this are very slow compared with modern aircraft (and positively snail-like compared with Concorde) they will give Skyship an important plus factor as far as safety is concerned. All the factors in its design: size, shape and finish, make it potentially the safest aircraft in the world.

Skyship doesn't rely on its engines to stay in the air, so that if an engine did fail, the worst thing that could happen would be for the craft to lose speed slightly. And the engine could probably be repaired en route, thanks to a very interesting design factor which has been incorporated in Skyship. All engines will be fully accessible to crew members, so if an engine did fail specialist technicians could repair the fault while the voyage was in progress.

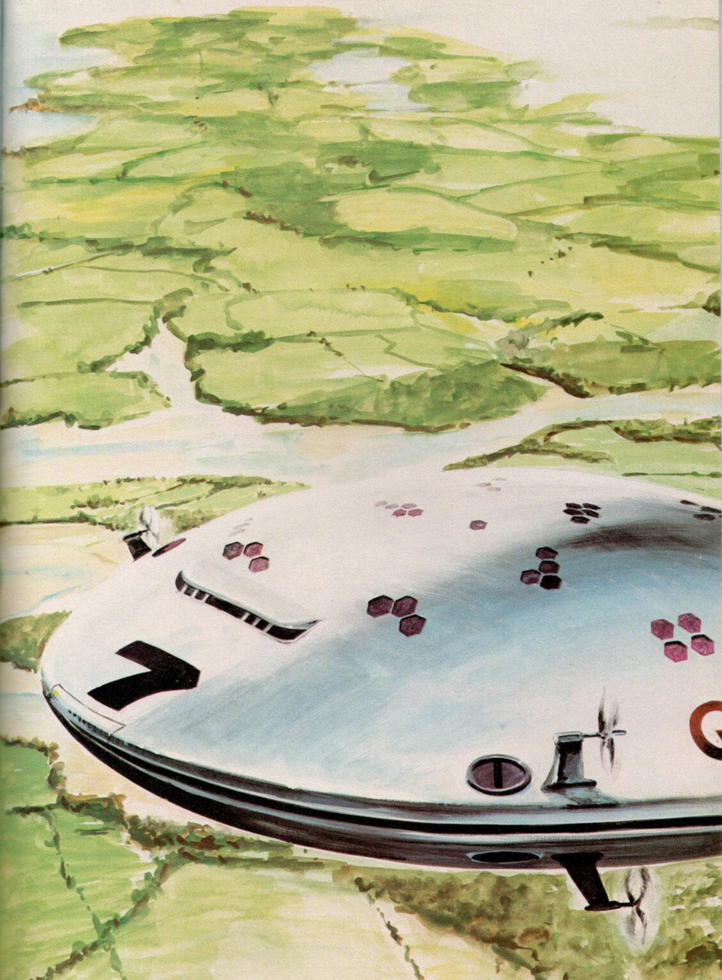
Another safety plus for Skyship is its crew arrangements. Instead of one man being in charge of the craft, as is the case in most modern aircraft, Skyship would be manned by a larger crew, similar to that on the bridge of a ship, so minimising the likelihood of human errors being made.

Yet another safety factor is Skyship's revolutionary fire-fighting equipment. If a fire should break out in one of the craft's compartments, helium gas will be released immediately into the relevant areas. Helium is an inert gas which will not support fire, so the fire would thus be put out as soon as it started.

It is hoped that Skyship's impressive safety factors will be instrumental in gaining confidence in its viability as a new form of transport, both from the public and industry, and will lead to its acceptance by countries all over the world.

Skyship will probably not use existing airports. It will take off and land on a circular pad of land of about ten acres, and will be serviced by offices and fuel stores, which will take up a further twenty acres.

Anchorage points will be spaced around the rim of the pad, so that more than one Skyship can be accommodated at each terminal. When landing, Skyship will hover over the pad, and hawsers (very strong anchorage ropes) will be attached from the ground to the craft. Skyship's engines will give a strong upward thrust, tightening the hawsers, then the Skyship will be winched down onto the pad. Take-offs would be in reverse, with the hawsers being cast off when the craft is ready to fly, thus making landing processes very speedy and simple.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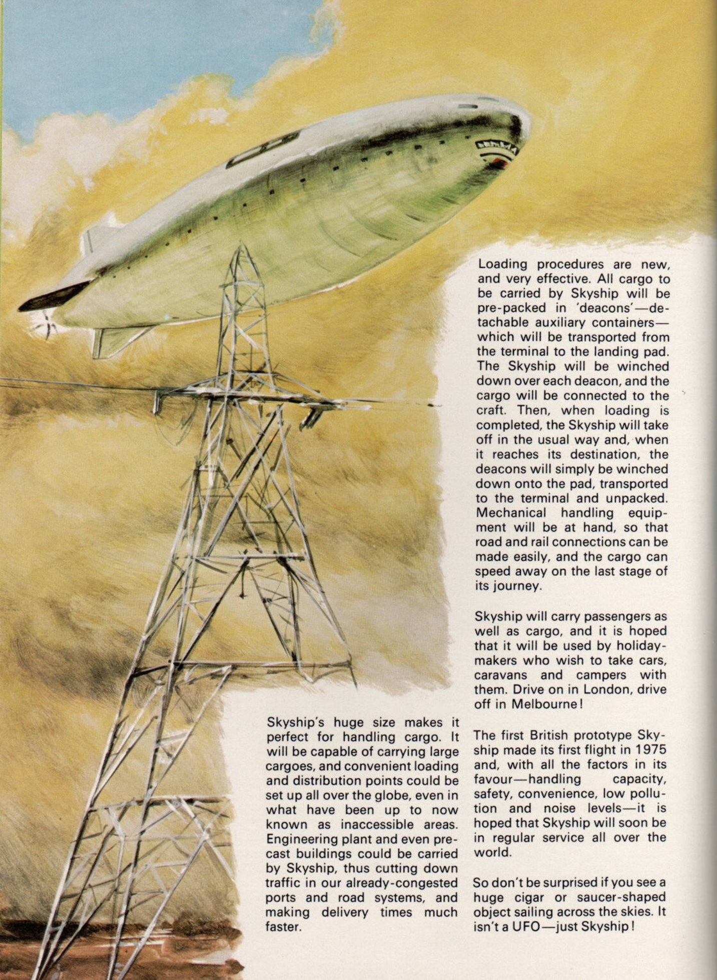


Skyship's huge size makes it perfect for handling cargo. It will be capable of carrying large cargoes, and convenient loading and distribution points could be set up all over the globe, even in what have been up to now known as inaccessible areas. Engineering plant and even precast buildings could be carried by Skyship, thus cutting down traffic in our already-congested ports and road systems, and making delivery times much faster.

Loading procedures are new, and very effective. All cargo to be carried by Skyship will be pre-packed in 'deacons'—detachable auxiliary containers—which will be transported from the terminal to the landing pad. The Skyship will be winched down over each deacon, and the cargo will be connected to the craft. Then, when loading is completed, the Skyship will take off in the usual way and, when it reaches its destination, the deacons will simply be winched down onto the pad, transported to the terminal and unpacked. Mechanical handling equipment will be at hand, so that road and rail connections can be made easily, and the cargo can speed away on the last stage of its journey.

Skyship will carry passengers as well as cargo, and it is hoped that it will be used by holidaymakers who wish to take cars, caravans and campers with them. Drive on in London, drive off in Melbourne!

The first British prototype Skyship made its first flight in 1975 and, with all the factors in its favour—handling capacity, safety, convenience, low pollution and noise levels—it is hoped that Skyship will soon be in regular service all over the world.

So don't be surprised if you see a huge cigar or saucer-shaped object sailing across the skies. It isn't a UFO—just Skyship!

JOURNEYS OF DISCOVERY

Now that man has landed on the Moon, the planets will be the objects of further flights of discovery into space. Here are the stories of one such flight which has already been successful, one which isn't likely to occur until at least the end of the century, and one which might be in the news by the time you come to read this annual.

TO JUPITER . . .

On March 2nd, 1972, a spacecraft blasted off from Cape Kennedy* on a fascinating mission. After a journey lasting almost two years it passed within 145,000 km. (90,000 miles) of Jupiter, its target, and sent back pictures and valuable scientific data to Earth.

Then came the second part of Pioneer 10's intriguing mission. A tremendous whiplash effect, caused by a combination of Jupiter's gravity and orbital speed, sent the spacecraft hurtling off towards the limits of the Solar System and beyond.

We may never know the ultimate fate of Pioneer 10. It may be destroyed in a giant cosmic explosion, or it might be sucked into one of those mysterious black holes which are currently the subject of so much controversy and discussion.

It is the third possibility—that the spacecraft may be captured and studied by another civilization—for which Pioneer 10 has been prepared. Aboard the ship is a sheet of gold anodized aluminium bearing various drawings which hopefully could be understood by whatever manner of beings might find them.

One shows a man and a woman, drawn to scale with the spacecraft. The man's hand is outstretched in what the scientists hope will be interpreted as a gesture of greeting. Other drawings show Earth's position in the Solar System, the Solar System's position in the Galaxy, and the approximate launch date of the ship, related to the positions of exploding stars at the time.

Whatever happens to Pioneer 10 in the years and centuries to come, one thing's sure: this aptly named craft is a true pioneer of space.

. . . AND MARS?

It is possible that a manned expedition to Mars could be launched before the end of the century. One project which has been studied by McDonnell Douglas in the United States is known as the Deimos project.

A huge spaceship would be necessary for such a project, and it would have to be assembled in Earth-orbit. It would take around nine months to reach Mars, and would then remain in Mars-orbit while the explorers descended to the surface of the planet in landing craft similar to the Apollo lunar module.

A whole range of roving vehicles, photographic equipment, and scientific study devices would be designed for the project, to ensure that the maximum amount of information could be gathered on the surface of 'The Red Planet'.

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

A rare alignment of the five outer planets will occur in the late 1970s, which will enable spacecraft to be launched on 'Grand Tours'. After much thought, the Americans have decided that such flights would be too expensive for the expected scientific gain, and they have now abandoned the idea. But it is possible that by the time you read this annual the Russians may have launched such a mission of discovery.

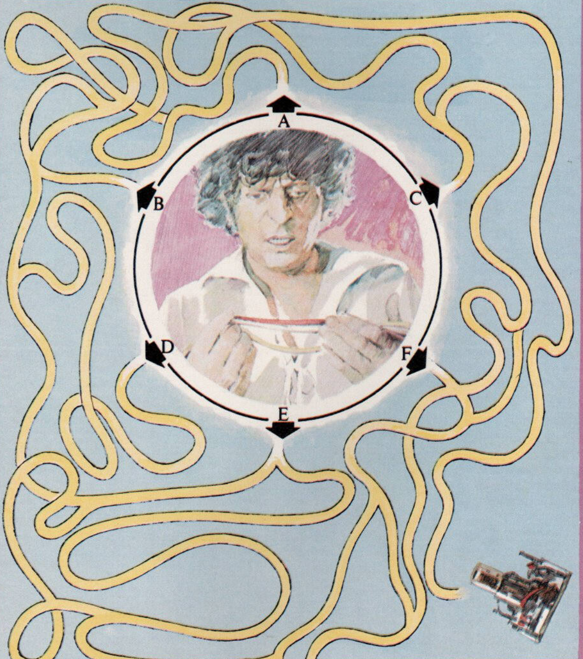
If they have not, then neither of the major space powers will have another opportunity for 170 years, because the outer planets move very slowly around the Sun, and the alignment will not occur again until then.

The diagram shows the two flight paths which were considered by the Americans before they decided to abandon the project. The gravitational pull and orbital velocity of one planet would 'whip' the spacecraft on its journey to the next, so cutting the normal journey time—about 18 years—by half. All along the journey, cameras and scientific recording equipment would observe the planets, and report the information back to Earth.

**The Cape Kennedy rocket base has now resumed its original name of Cape Canaveral.*

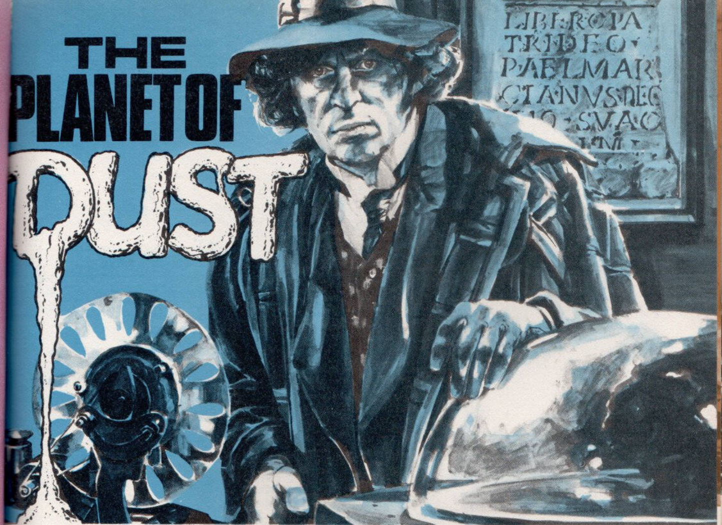
TRICKY CONNECTION

The Tardis materialises on a small, smouldering asteroid. Soon after landing the Doctor discovers that the asteroid is about to explode. In his hurry to get away from the asteroid, the Doctor accidentally fuses a circuit in the Renticulator. He has just fifteen seconds to cut into the wire leading to the Renticulator and plug in the alternative power source. If he chooses the wrong wire he will be blown to bits before he can make good his escape. Which wire would you have chosen?



Answer: A.

THE PLANET OF DUST



As the Doctor ran a practised eye over the flickering needles and glowing lights of the Tardis control panel, Leela watched him carefully, finding her subject infinitely more interesting, if even less revealing than the complexities of the instruments that had brought them there.

The Doctor's face finally broke into a warm smile. 'I think that should do it,' he said.

'You mean it's safe to go outside now?' asked Leela.

The Doctor coughed. 'That's not exactly what I said, though I dare say it's safe enough out there. I was merely remarking that we had completed the landing safely and should be within a few hundred yards of the origin of the signals.'

'Oh!' Leela was restless. The strange voyages in the Tardis had made her long for the blue skies and sun, made her wish for the feeling of a stiff breeze on her hair and face. She looked up at the video screen and waited for the Doctor to switch it on.

They had come to the planet after the Doctor had detected an Inter-galactic distress signal coming from it. He did not like involving himself in space politics so much, but a distress call had to be answered, wherever it came from. He flicked a switch and the screen flashed to life.

'*Ugh*!' Leela groaned involuntarily as the scanner revealed a brown, dusty surface, devoid of vegetation. The Doctor continued revolving the scanner until he came upon a white object, half buried in the dust. He gently touched the zoom. It was a skull, some seventeen feet in length and with two grey horns protruding from the top.

'Looks like the cow didn't make it, after all,' said Leela.

The Doctor ignored her attempt at humour.

'This is not the moon,' he chided, 'and whatever that creature was, it most certainly wasn't a cow.' He adjusted the zoom again. 'You see the backward curve of those teeth? It makes the tearing of flesh that much easier. This animal was a voracious meat-eater.'

Leela looked at the long rows of sharp white teeth that filled the mouth of the giant grinning skull. They were almost as big as she was. She could have climbed in and out of the hollow eye sockets with no trouble at all. A sudden humming noise told her that the Doctor had activated the Tardis's door mechanism.

'Right,' said the Doctor cheerfully. 'Let's go and see what this is all about.'

As soon as Leela set foot on

the surface of the planet, she started. It was moving! Gently and softly, but it was moving. Leela thought what it must be like to be able to walk on water.

But there was no water here, nor the faintest suggestion that there ever had been. There were only the featureless shifting dusthills stretching as far as they could see, and the thin brown mist, dry and stale, that caught in their throats. And, of course, the skull.

The Doctor was studying a dial on the small radio receiver he carried in his hands. He looked up from the dial in the direction of the skull.

'It would seem the signal comes from close to the head of our dead carnivore,' he said.

'Then perhaps we're too late to be of any help?' suggested Leela. 'Perhaps we–'

She was cut short by the Doctor's suddenly upraised hand. He seemed to be listening hard and it was a few seconds before she realised that he was not staring at her, but at the Tardis behind her. As Leela turned to see what was happening there was a tremendous '*Whoosh*!' and a great geyser of dry brown dust shot into the air around the Tardis.

'Watch out!' shouted the Doctor. 'I think she's going down!'

He started to run towards the Tardis, but as he reached Leela he stopped. The column of dust grew thicker and thicker as huge clouds were thrown from the seemingly bottomless sands below. There was a roaring sound that filled their ears, a great wind that blew the brown dust hard into their faces.

But as Leela struggled to hear the Doctor's words she could also hear, underneath the roaring and the howling, the insistent hum of machinery. The mushroom cloud of dust above the Tardis was suddenly illuminated by a beam of light shot upward from inside the planet itself, and as both the Doctor and Leela stepped forward, the ground beneath them erupted into a maelstrom of biting, stinging, brown dust.

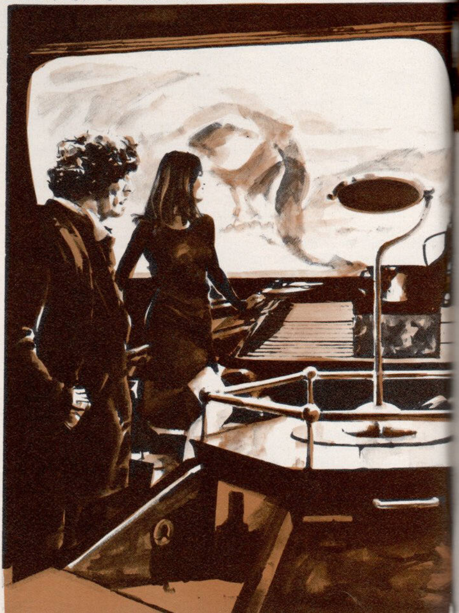
For nearly a minute they felt the dust shooting skywards past them, slowly spreading into the still air. And then the ground beneath their feet shifted violently and fell away, and they were engulfed in the same bright light that had lit up the Tardis. Leela looked down and saw a deep hole where the ground had been. She was standing in mid air!

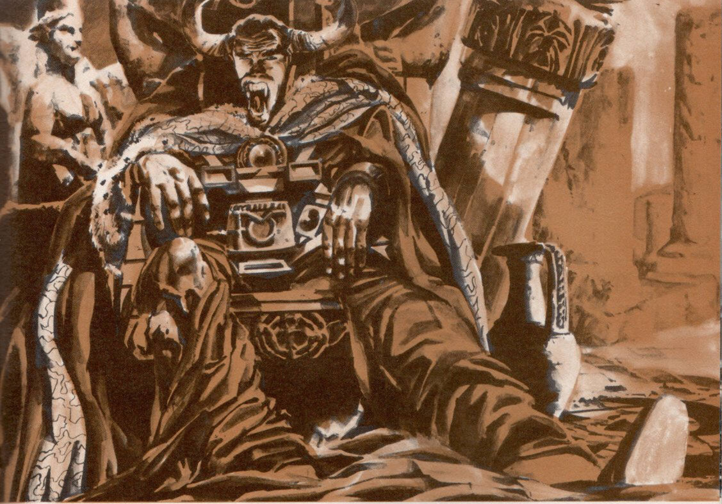
'Leela! Grab hold of my hand!' The Doctor's voice was urgent, but held no fear.

Leela reached for his hand and grabbed it. Together they descended on a column of air, occasionally flying up and down like the ping pong balls on water fountains at the funfair rifle range.

At last they came to a halt. The air lift was switched off, and they found themselves once again with their feet on the ground. Neither Leela nor the Doctor really noticed, though . . . they were too stunned by the scene before them.

Leela and the Doctor had landed inside a huge chamber. The walls and the ceilings were made of the same brown dust that covered the planet's surface, but they were kept from collapsing by jets of air coming from a series of strategically placed 'guns' hovering along their edges. In front of them at the other end of the chamber there was a massive chair. Between them and the chair





there were plants of all shapes and sizes, plants so varied that even the Doctor had not seen a display like it in all his travels through time and space. There were flowers with big yellow blooms; dwarf shrubs with no leaves; bright red vines; golden, shimmering cheese-plants, and tiny electric-blue clovers.

But all of this, magnificent as it was, paled by comparison with the creature that sat on the chair. The horned, scaly head with its grinning, tooth-filled mouth, seemed an afterthought, like a cherry on top of a cake. For the body was so massive that Leela was unable to take it all in. The clawed fists were the size of houses. The squat legs were wider than a motorway. Leela felt that if the creature were to move the whole planet would be jolted off its axis.

The Doctor, who had recognised the bone structure of the creature as that of a Larkal – the same as the skeleton they had seen on the surface – was trying to work out the connection when the creature spoke, in a shrill voice that made them wonder whether it was the creature speaking, or some tinny tape recording in the wall.

'Welcome,' it said. 'I am Beshi. I owe you an apology.'

'An explanation might be more useful.'

Beshi shifted in his seat, an operation that surprisingly caused no reverberations in the chamber.

The thin voice continued. 'By your landing place I assume you have come here in answer to the distress signal from my ship. I am sorry to say, but that signal has been going out continuously for the past year, and I can do nothing to stop it. Ever since my colleague – you may have seen his bones – and I crashed here that message has been transmitting. It might please you to know that you are the first person to answer it.'

'It might.'

'You see, the distress signal comes from our ship, and our ship is buried deep in the dust of this planet somewhere. If I could find it I might turn it off, but I can't. I wonder if you could help me on that point? Once found, it should be a simple matter to repair the ship and take off again.'

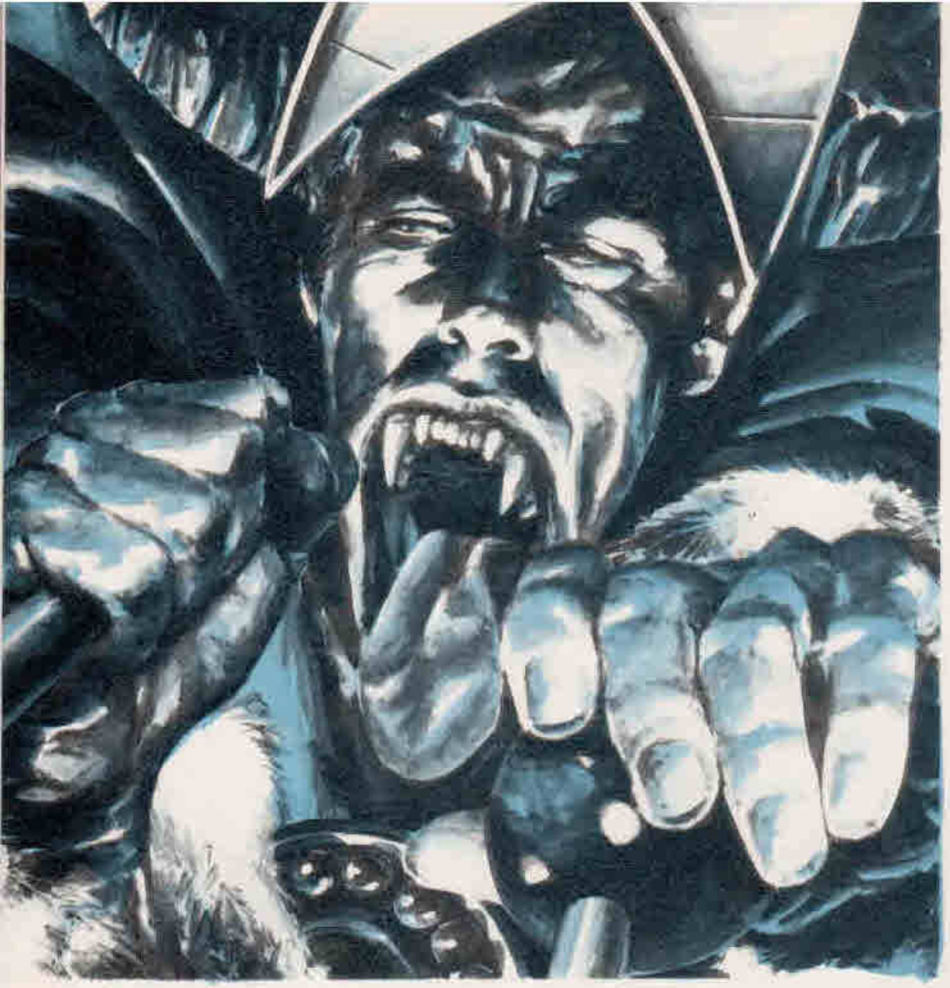
The Doctor, remembering the skeleton on the surface, was understandably suspicious. 'How long have you been here?'

'As I have already said – about one year. But time down here is not easy to track. One year is an estimation.'

'And not a very accurate one at that. Your colleague's bones appear to have been here for a good deal longer than that. What have you lived on?'

Beshi smiled, showing all his teeth.

'We need very little food to



live. What small amounts I require, I take from the leaves of my little friends here.' He nodded towards the plants. 'And while you're here, I wonder if you would be able to help me.'

'What do you want?'

'I have spent my time in the study of these plants. As you will have probably seen, there is very little water on the surface of this planet. If it were not for my careful tending, these plants would die. I have worked out a way by which I might let them fend for themselves.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean to give these plants the ability to think for themselves. I mean to give them the ability to walk and talk like other living things. Imagine it! A human can walk – a plant cannot. A plant can live off sunshine and rain – a human cannot. Imagine a plant that is able to walk to find water, one that can uproot itself and move out of the shadow, one with all the abilities of a human, but none of the appetite. This desert of a planet could become a paradise covered with lush vegetation.'

'And how do you propose to do this?'

'By imprinting the impulses from my brain onto the plants' nervous system. I will also use the reptilian ability to grow extra limbs to help them grow a crude form of legs. But,' Beshi opened his hands in a gesture of helplessness, 'neither of these techniques will work without your assistance. We are cold-blooded creatures and the plants would reject whatever I grafted on to them unless . . .'

'Yes?'

'Unless I have some tissue from a warm-blooded creature.'

The Doctor looked down at the ground.

'Like me?'

'Or your companion.'

The Doctor surveyed the plants between him and Beshi. He felt uneasy. 'Where do you propose to conduct these experiments?' he asked.

Beshi rose to his feet. They were surprised to see that he sank only a few inches into the dusty floor.

'Follow me.'

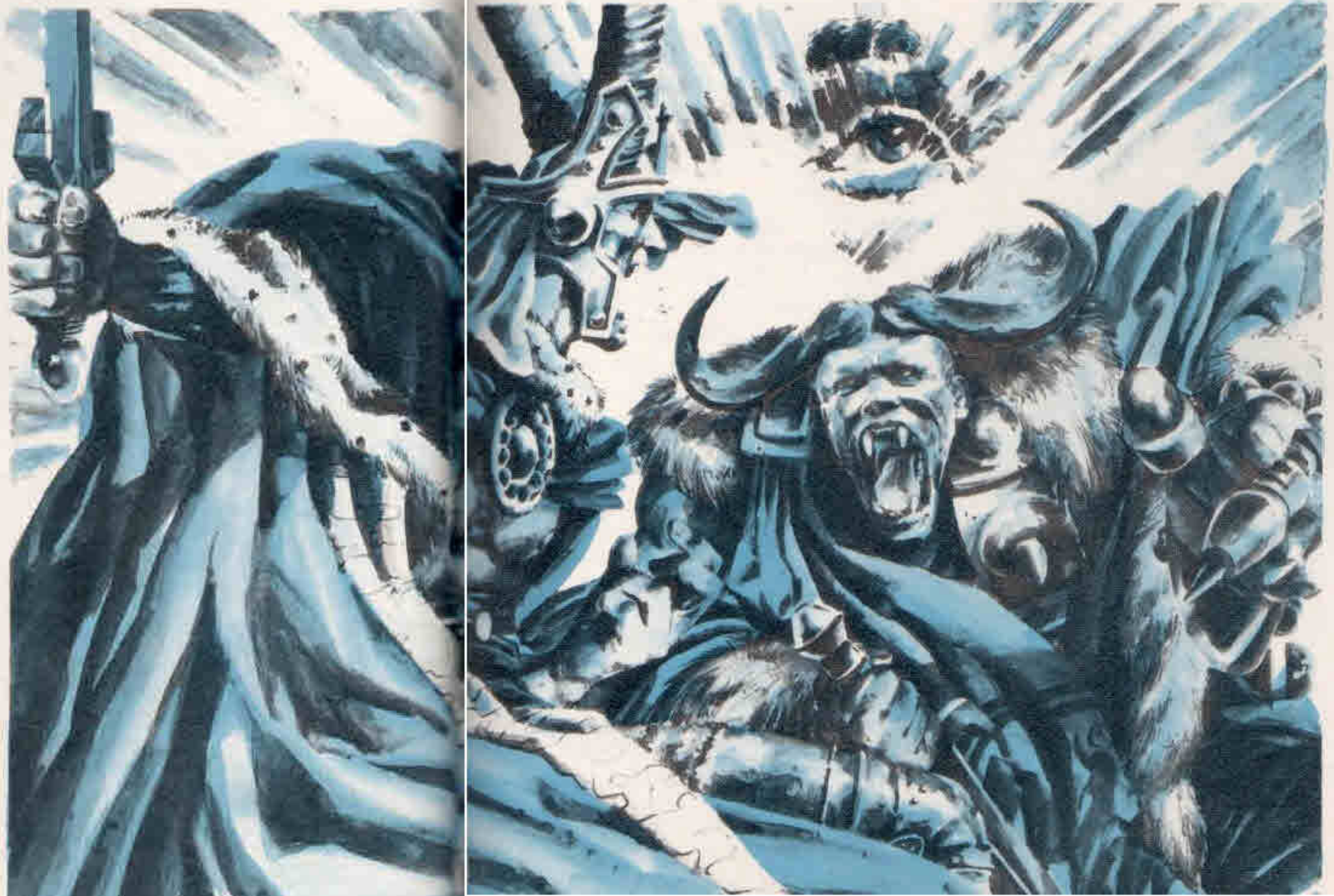
They walked for almost half an hour down a long corridor, with the Doctor and Leela having to run, and Beshi taking one giant stride and then waiting for them. Eventually he stopped altogether.

'Perhaps it would be better if I carried you,' he said.

'Yes, perhaps it would.'

Beshi picked them both up in one hand and carefully carried them for the rest of the journey. Eventually he came to another chamber where there were even more plants than in the first. He took them to a gigantic machine in the middle and placed them on top of a circle of what seemed to be slate. Next to them, inside glass cases, were two large flowers, tied to stakes.

'Here we are,' said Beshi. 'In a few moments we can begin.'



The Doctor looked round, figuring out a way he could escape if things went wrong. As he did so, he felt a curious prickling sensation in his brain, and he knew it was being telepathically probed. He drove all thoughts from his mind and relaxed, so as to improve receptivity. The message was faint, but it was clear.

'Help us, please, help us.'

The Doctor looked at the nearest of the two plants. Its leaves were twitching. He looked at Beshi, who was working at the controls of the machine.

'He cannot hear us. He cannot receive telepathically.'

'What do you want?' The Doctor formed the question clearly in his mind.

'We want you to get us away from here. We want you to get us away from Beshi.'

'But why? I thought he was trying to help you.'

'No doubt he told you he wanted to help us by making us able to walk in search of water. No doubt he told you that for this he would need human tissue. He needs human tissue, for it is true he wants to create a hybrid plantman, but this is not for our own good, it is for his benefit. He knows he can never leave this planet. He knows he will die if he doesn't. Beshi cannot eat plants. Our sap is like dust and is poison to him. But, if by some process he could produce a plant with blood in its veins, with flesh as its fruit, he would be able to stay here as long as he wanted. He could gorge himself until the day he died.'

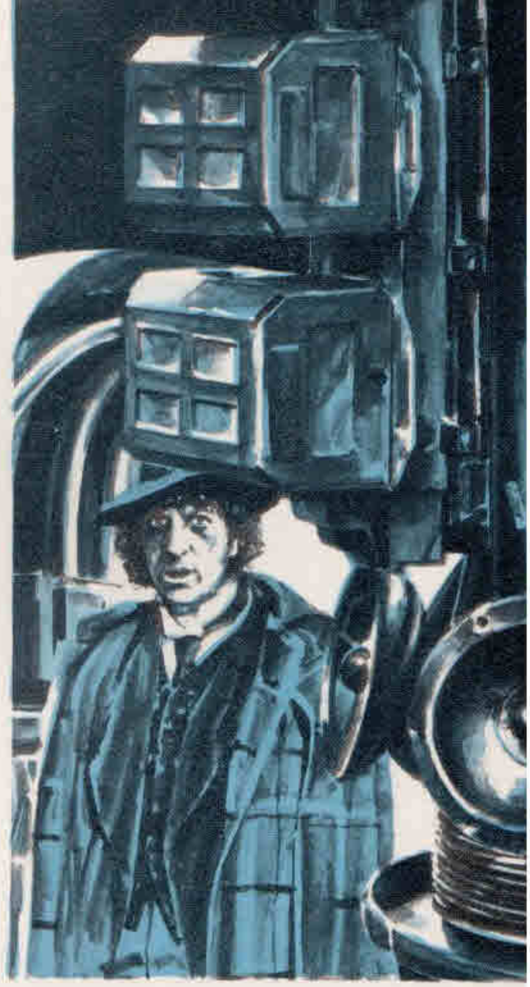
'But what can we do?'

'I don't know. But you must know that Beshi is desperate. He has not eaten for two years, except for his companion, and that – even for a Larkal Reptilian – is an extremely long time. You are his last hope.'

At that moment Beshi turned round from the control panel and looked quizzically down at them.

The Doctor spoke. 'Where did your ship crash, Beshi?'

'Near to the spot where you landed. My companion and I were travelling to Lumia when our fuel injector choked. As we landed to clear it the retro rockets failed and we sank into the dust. We were marooned.'

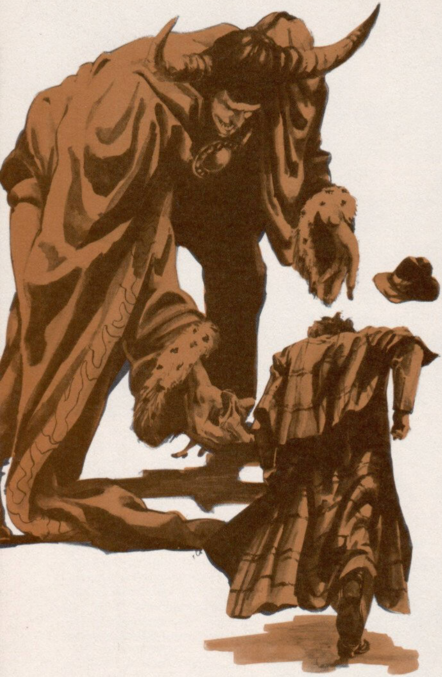


'Surely you would have done better to try and raise the ship and repair it than –'

Beshi smiled. 'Than killing him? Doctor, ours is a savage land. The competitive instinct is strong. In any one-to-one crisis situation the result is violence. It is understood. He most certainly would have killed me.'

'Perhaps.'

'There is no perhaps about it, Doctor. We have a saying: you can take a man from a country, but you can't take that country from a man. Even out here, on this arid dustbowl, it was inevitable that we fight, for fighting is our lives. We thrill to it. The odds make no difference, neither do the place and the time. We know only that we must fight, and that we must sell our lives dearly, if we must



sell them at all.'

'Then why don't you try and repair your ship? I could help you. I have already guessed your plan of turning these plants into a food supply, and it will not work. You say you must fight, despite all your scientific accomplishments. Well, so be it, but this is not fighting. This is not the work of a warrior. This is not the work of a barbarian, a true Larkal. This is skulking, devious, sly work. There is nothing in it for you.'

Beshi started angrily. His thin, high pitched voice seemed lost in his cavernous mouth; the jaws seemed too big to enunciate the words clearly.

'You think I don't know that? You think I don't wish to be back on Larkal? Back in that bustling space-port where creatures of all races stop to seek enjoyment on their long voyages, back in the midst of all that teeming life – instead of breathing dust with a row of old cabbages?'

The Doctor spoke urgently.

'Then let me help you. Take me to your ship. I have equipment on the Tardis that might be able to repair it.'

'But, Doctor, you are too late. I have estimated that I have only six days left to live, and the transbreeding I had planned will take up four of those. I would steal your own ship if it wasn't so small. I do not want to stay here, but I do want to live.'

The Doctor began arguing once again. Whenever there was a chance of a peaceful outcome to a problem he was most persuasive. At last Beshi held up one of his massive hands.

'All right. I will take you to the ship and give you two days to repair it. There is just one condition.' He bent down and lifted Leela into the air. 'And that is that she stays here.'

'But–'

'That is the most I can offer you.'

Reluctantly, the Doctor agreed. After reassuring Leela that he would be back in two days whether he succeeded or not, the Doctor let Beshi pick him up and carry him to where the spaceship lay.

'Forgive me for lying to you about its whereabouts, but that does not matter now. In two days' time I will begin the experiments. If you have succeeded, fire the retro rockets. I will hear them.'

Beshi left and the Doctor began the massive task ahead of him. The ship, made out of a paper thin, but rock hard metal, looked in reasonable shape. It was of standard Larkal design, with large fins and a rotating control chamber. The biggest obstacle he would face in checking it out was one of size.

He climbed into the propulsor to look for damage. He could not find any. He wandered among the circuitry of the computa-course and found no defects. The ship seemed to be in perfect working order except for one thing – the vital Mechordinate Stellaprime was missing. The Doctor thought hard. Comparatively small though it was, the Stellaprime was not something that got dislodged. Because of its importance it could only be moved by unlocking a series of electric seals. Somebody had deliberately taken it. But who?

'The other one.'

The Doctor heard no sound.

'The other one.' It was the plants, communicating telepathically once again. The Doctor climbed out of the Larkal craft to find hundreds and hundreds of plants in the chamber.

'Which other one?' he asked. A large, purple flower that looked like a pansy inched forward.

'The one Beshi killed. He took out the Stellaprime before they crashed. We read it in his mind before he died. He wanted to kill Beshi for something he had done on Larkal – something involving a female. Beshi killed him first, but he never found the Stellaprime. He did not even know it was missing. He thought the fault was with the retro rockets.'

'Why didn't you tell him what was wrong?'

'We tried. Although we can receive messages from his brain, his brain is unable to open enough to receive messages from us. If you want to save your companion you must find the Stellaprime.'

'It must be somewhere near the skeleton. Somewhere directly above this chamber. But how can I find it?'

'We will find it for you. As you can see, we are able to move. We usually live on the surface of the planet, but whenever anyone comes near we retreat underground. Beshi was the first one to penetrate our underground defences.'

'Couldn't you have fought him?'

'We are a passive people. When danger threatens, we retire until it passes.'

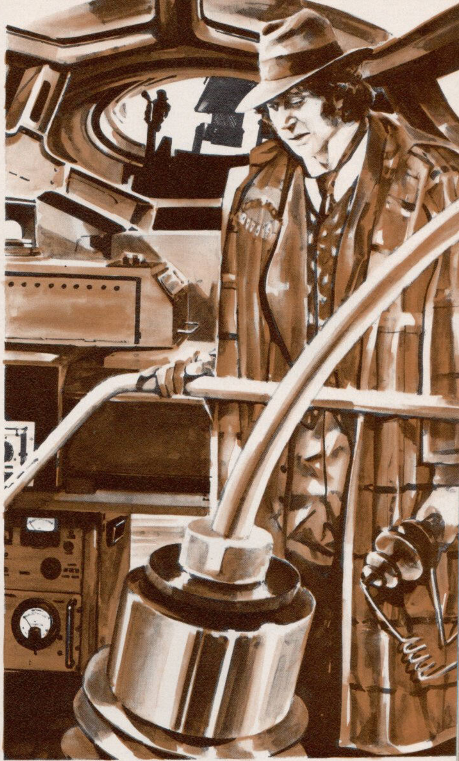
'And if it does not pass?'

'Nothing lasts forever, not even us. In the meantime we drink the dust and wait.'

'But what about water?'

'Water? We do not drink water, although Beshi is under a similar misconception. We drink dust. It is the dust in our veins that makes us poisonous to anyone who might try to eat us. But enough of this – we must find the Stellaprime.'

The Doctor watched help-



lessly as the plants moved along and buried themselves into the wall of the chamber. He sat down miserably. There was nothing he could do but wait.

Back in Beshi's experiment room, long, long hours later, Leela was getting worried. Already it seemed as though the two days had passed. In fact there was still three hours to go before the deadline, but she had no way of knowing that. She only knew that Beshi was getting increasingly restless. Perhaps the Doctor would appear in the Tardis and rescue her. Perhaps he would mend the ship and Beshi would let her go. Perhaps she could jump down from the machine and hide. Perhaps . . . .

Perhaps the Doctor could not mend the ship. Perhaps he had tried to get to her in the Tardis and had been whisked off thousands of years and miles away by that unpredictable machine. Perhaps . . . Beshi's voice broke into her increasingly worried thoughts.

'I am sorry,' he was saying as he lifted her up and put her inside a huge electrical coil that also contained a plant, 'but the time has come.'

The Doctor, unaware that Beshi's patience had run out, was getting desperate. There had been no sign of the plants, and no attempt at communication. If he did not hear anything within another hour, he would have to try and rescue Leela in the Tardis.

'Got it.'

The quiet message inside his brain was like an electric shock. It was like a beautiful, joyous cry of freedom. He looked up to see the plants coming out of the dust wall with the Stellaprime on their backs. Now all he had to do was fit it, but that was going to take up yet more time. And time was something he had precious little of . . . .

Leela looked at the plant next to her inside the coil. Somehow, she got the impression that it was trying to console her. It was, but she had no way of knowing it. Like Beshi, her mind was too restricted to receive the gentle telepathy of the plants. The giant shadow of Beshi crossed them and she looked up.

'I wish it could have been otherwise,' he said in his metallic whisper. 'But it isn't. Forgive me.' His hand reached out for a lever and suddenly there was a roaring sound.

Beshi looked up quickly.

'The retros! He's done it!'

Leela almost collapsed with relief and the plant beside her shook as if it were laughing.

Hours later, with Beshi gone to wrestle with whatever violent fate was in store for him, the Doctor and Leela said farewell to the plants.

'We shall return to the surface when you are gone,' said the purple pansy. 'I would like to thank you for your help.'

The Doctor smiled. 'And I would like to thank you for yours.'

'Are you sure you won't stay as our guests for a while?'

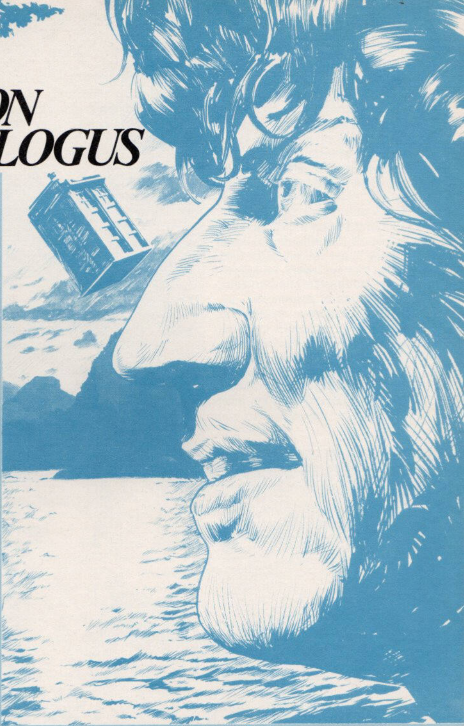
'No, thanks. We'd be delighted to, but this atmosphere plays havoc with the tonsils. I'm absolutely parched.'

'So be it. Goodbye, and good luck.'

Leela said a special goodbye to the plant she had been in the coil with, and then she and the Doctor got on board the Tardis. They watched the waving plants disappear from view and then they sat down and drank seven cups of tea each before they even spoke.

'Mmmm,' said Leela, looking down at the leaves in her cup, 'that's one plant I'd walk miles for.'

TERROR ON TANTALOGUS



The air was warm and fragrant like a summer's day on earth. For good measure there was the hum of insects and the chirruping of what the Doctor took to be birds to make them feel even more at home. It was only the colour of the foliage and the dull, rhythmic thudding sound that told them they were not on earth, but somewhere in the region of Alpha Mosi in Galaxy 5. Both the Doctor and Leela breathed deeply.

'Marvellous!' said Leela. 'Really first rate! This is the kind of place we should visit more often.'

'The climate's right enough,' agreed the Doctor, 'but we don't know what the inhabitants are like yet.'

'You need have no worries on that count.' The melodious voice caused them to turn swiftly round. Standing at the edge of the clearing, under a magnificent red-leaved tree, were four small, plump creatures with tiny black eyes and benevolent smiles.

'Allow me to introduce myself,' said one of them, unfolding his arms and approaching the Doctor with his arms outstretched. 'I am Akhemi, this is my brother Akhoomi, and these are our friends Shem and Matabi. We welcome you to Tantalogus.'

'Tantalogus,' mused the Doctor out loud, shaking Akhemi's curiously cold hand. 'Tantalogus . . . no, I can't say I've heard of this planet before.'

'We are not ones to advertise our presence,' smiled Akhemi, 'but that does not mean we know nothing of hospitality. Come, let us take you to our city.'

The Doctor and Leela followed the four Tantalogans through a series of the most beautiful glades either of them had ever seen. The effect of such splendour after a long time in the Tardis made Leela feel quite heady. Eventually they came to a collection of gleaming white one-storey buildings, each one individual in design, and each one magnificently luxurious.

'Come, let me take you to see my wife and child. We live in this dwelling unit here.' He pointed to the nearest of the houses. It had a large veranda where two other Tantalogans were sitting enjoying the sunshine. One of them was similar to Akhemi, but much smaller and the other one had three bright red plumes growing out of the top of her head. 'This is Ashad, my wife, and Akhami, my son.' The two Tantalogans looked up at the Doctor and Leela, with bright smiles creasing their oval faces.

'Welcome to Tantalogus,' they chorused.

'Thank you,' answered Leela. 'What a beautiful place this is.'

'We like it,' smiled Ashad. 'Tell me, where are you from?'

'We're from another place,' said Leela.

'What brings you here?'

'That's something I'd dearly like to know myself.' The Doctor's voice was wary, and seemed at odds with the pervading atmosphere of politeness.

'You mean your visit was not planned?' Akhemi's tinkling voice showed concern...

'Not exactly. You see we were on our way to Alca Nortis in the Tardis, when suddenly we were whisked from inter-dimensional non-space to your planet.'

'Was there something wrong with your ship?'

'I'm not sure. Similar things have happened before, but I thought the new Renticular Vaccualator I'd installed had put an end to that sort of thing.'

'Renticular Vaccualator?'

'It doesn't matter. I'll take a look at it later. Now, if you don't mind showing us around I'd very much like to see more of your beautiful planet.'

And so Akhemi led them round the principal city of Tantalogus, showing them the art galleries and dance halls, restaurants and theatres, sports arenas and libraries.

'It's just like earth,' said Leela, when they returned to Akhemi's house, 'except there's no poverty or pollution.'

Akhemi nodded sagely. 'We have heard of such things from other visitors. Such a terrible pity. We Tantalogans are a deeply religious people, and we feel this helps. We have to observe the strictest codes in our religion.'

'And what religion is that?'

Akhemi looked mildly surprised. 'Why the only religion, of course. But never mind, we will discuss it later. Now I must take my family to the place of worship. You may make yourself comfortable here until we return. Treat it as you would your own home.'

He smiled once more, took the hand of his wife and his child and left. The Doctor and Leela went inside. Leela flopped down on one of the huge cushions that were scattered around the floor.

'Well, you've got to hand it to them – they certainly know how to make you feel welcome.'

The Doctor, if he heard, made no answer. He was busy snooping around the house, picking up objects and putting them down, looking in cupboards and under tables.

Leela coughed. 'I said they certainly know how to make you feel welcome,' she repeated loudly.

'Yes, yes,' muttered the Doctor. He was standing by a large panel in the wall, running his fingers along the edge. He rapped hard once or twice and then stood back, like a painter admiring his work.

'What are you doing?'

'Yes, yes,' murmured the Doctor, in a vain attempt to show he was still listening, 'they certainly do.'

'What?'

The Doctor seemed to wake up. 'What? I said they certainly do, don't they?'

'Don't they what?' Leela knew the Doctor had not been listening.

'Whatever it was you said they do, Leela. Now come here a minute.' The Doctor's voice told Leela this was not the time for banter.

She got up from the cushion and walked across the room. As she did so, her foot caught the edge of the ornate matting that served as a carpet and she stumbled. She threw out her arms to protect herself as she fell and her left hand touched one of the carved Tantalogan animals set into the floor. There was a whirring sound and the panel the Doctor had been inspecting swung open.

'Well done, Leela!' said the Doctor, as he helped her to her feet. 'I thought there was something funny about a locked door in the middle of a living room.'

The Doctor led Leela inside. If there was something funny about the door there was nothing remotely amusing about what was behind it.

When she first saw them, Leela gasped and turned her face to the Doctor's chest. The Doctor held her to him and let out a long low whistle. In front of them, stretching out in neat lines, were what looked like wax dummies, each enclosed in a plasti-flex container resembling a giant test-tube.

The dummies, if that's what they were, stood still, their faces set, their eyes wide open. Each one was surrounded by a maze of wires and hundreds of tubes went in and out of them, carrying various different coloured fluids. The Doctor recognised some of the dummies as species from planets he had visited in the past. There were Zarmenium dummies, Klutonium dummies, Harbek dummies, and even a couple of what seemed to be earth people. None of them moved or made a sound.

As they walked along the rows of plasti-flex containers a sudden sound came from the doorway they had just entered.

'Quick!' hissed the Doctor. 'Don't make a sound!' He grabbed Leela's arm and pulled her behind one of the rows of containers.

They crouched down and listened. Somebody was standing in the doorway they had just entered.

'They've found the storehouse!' Akhemi's melodic voice was uncharacteristically harsh. 'Quick! See if they've gone back to their ship!'

There was the sound of footsteps running away and the whirring sound of the door closing. For a while, everything was completely quiet.

'I don't know if you're in here,' Akhemi began confidentially, his voice having regained its seductive musical quality, 'but I suspect you are. There is something I would like you to know.'

The Doctor and Leela crouched lower.

'First of all, you are not here by accident. Your ship was diverted by the magnetic warp we use to lure other unwary travellers to our planet.' There was a pause, and then the sound of footsteps moving slowly towards them.

'You see, the quality of life on Tantalogus is something we wish to preserve. To do so, we need food and labour. You, Doctor, will be most useful as a source of mental sustenance. I have already seen that you have a powerful scientific mind. Your young companion should provide excellent breeding stock.' Leela stifled a cry. The footsteps were coming closer.

'The Tantalogan brain, you must understand, needs constant nourishing. The body needs less, but it too must have sustenance. That is why we on Tantalogus are – I believe the earth word is – cannibalistic in our habits. You see –'

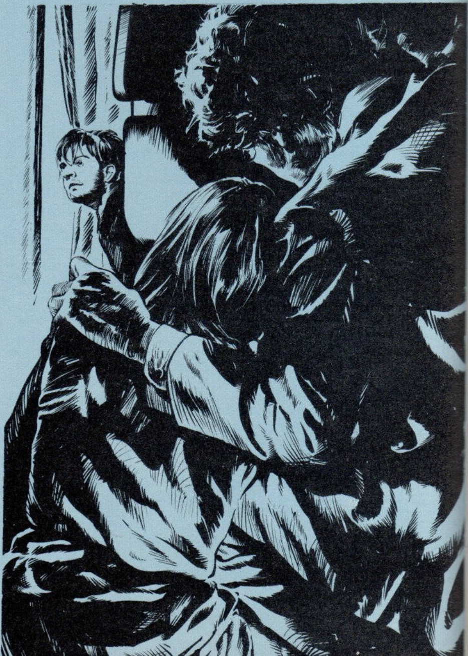
As the voice droned on in its rhythmic, insidious way and the footsteps came closer and closer, Leela felt she would be sick if she didn't do something. She lifted her head from the Doctor's chest, but before she could say or do anything her eyes fell upon the humanoid dummy in the plasti-flex container right next to her face. The open staring eyes, and the mouth, opening and closing in a helpless, silent, mewing attempt at communication, told her one thing – the dummies were alive!

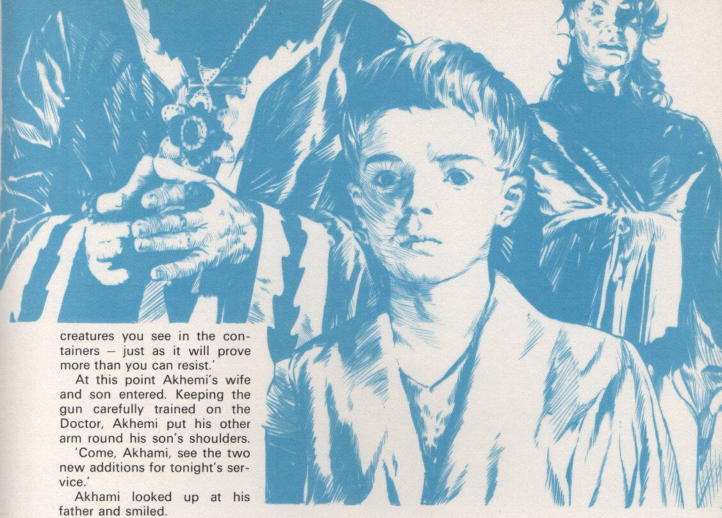
Dragged back to reality by the echo of her scream, Leela found herself in the Doctor's arms, staring straight into the barrel of a huge gun that Akhemi carried in his small pudgy fist.

'So, there you are. I *thought* you would still be here. That's why I sent Akhoomi away. You two are quite a prize, you know.'

'You fiend!' said the Doctor.

Akhemi smiled. 'You may call me what you wish. To you I am a fiend. To me, you are a hypocrite, a dabbler in other people's affairs. To me you are a useless pontificator, a peddler of invented morals, whose frail egocentric shell cannot disguise the lack of substance beneath. A fiend, am I? Because I breed intelligent creatures and milk their brains? If my behaviour is in some way abhorrent to your code of ethics, so is yours to mine. As I have said before, Doctor, we are a deeply religious people. And religion, true belief, has shown itself stronger than each and every one of those





creatures you see in the containers – just as it will prove more than you can resist.'

At this point Akhemi's wife and son entered. Keeping the gun carefully trained on the Doctor, Akhemi put his other arm round his son's shoulders.

'Come, Akhami, see the two new additions for tonight's service.'

Akhami looked up at his father and smiled.

Leela shuddered. 'You butcher!' she shouted.

'Butcher?' smiled Akhemi. 'I don't think so. If you could liberate your mind from its crippling inhibitions you would see how devout I am. In fact, you *will* be able to see for yourself when we take you to the place of worship.'

'What do you mean to do with us?' The Doctor's voice was cold, hard.

'I mean to do what any other Tantalogan in my position would do. You see, just as some races worship the sun or the rain or the sea, we also worship that which sustains us, we worship death . . . the death of others.'

The Doctor and Leela stared hard at the smiling family.

'Why can't you *work* to sustain yourselves? Why can't you farm the land like other people?'

'Why should we work? We live and we die like others – is that not enough? How we fill the time between is of little relevance. We choose to live off those creatures we can catch and whose proteins we can purify.'

'Like parasites!'

'Ha! You call us parasites, but we are not. Come, follow me.'

Akhemi led them out of the door to the back of his house. He pointed to a square white building that stood on a hill nearby.

'Were we to till the earth, to farm the soil until it turned to dust I might agree with you. Were we to harvest the fruits of the trees, fish the seas until they were empty or hunt our fellow animals into extinction I would say – yes, you are right, we are parasites.

'But we do none of these things. We do not inhabit this planet as fleas on the back of a dog. Instead we feed the planet, we nurture it, and in return the planet gives us a sufficiently strong magnetic field to help us to snatch vessels like yours, even from deep in the void of non-space.'

'Do you mean the planet is alive?'

Akhemi smiled. 'Listen – can't you hear the dull thudding beat of its heart? Alive? This planet is life itself. Feel the grass beneath your feet, see the leaves on the trees, the bushes and hedgerows, the sponges and cacti! You ask if this planet is alive? Ha!' He brought the gun up to the Doctor's head.

'And because it is alive, it demands death. You will not be the first earth people I have killed. There were others like you, whining apologies of men, filled with grand visions of exploration, seeking to stamp humanity's vision onto the rest of the cosmos. A blindfold man

would have more chance of spearing a fly with a pin. I have studied the history of your world, I have seen how for millions of years you have lived and fought and died within six feet of the surface: helpless, foolish, blind, ignorant fools that you are.

'And you, who have merely scratched the physical surface of your planet try to give us instructions in the realms of morals and philosophy. You try to lead us in an inconceivably more complex world than your own, a world whose surface you could not even begin to scratch. Right? Wrong? What does it matter?'

'You speak like someone who is afraid.' Leela had determined she would meet whatever fate had to offer with dignity. 'You speak like someone who has just discovered he has feelings, and is afraid of their power, afraid of what they might do to his careful arrangements. You sound like an unhappy human.'

'I breed humans!'

The Doctor followed Leela's lead, a contemptuous snarl in his voice.

'Yes, you breed humans, and whatever living thing you can capture. You breed them and use them in your unspeakable, ungodly manner to protect your precious quality of life. You destroy anything that might challenge or in any way interfere with the daily hell that you call living. You are worse off than those poor creatures in the plasti-flex cases. You call this living? How can you be alive when you have no feelings?'

The serene smile on Akhemi's face did not waver.

'But, Doctor,' he explained, 'I never said we were alive.'

'Then . . . then . . .'

'Exactly. My family and I have been on this planet for seven hundred and forty-five years. Ever since we were sent here we have not aged one second. For how can we age, how can we shrivel and rot when we are dead?

'On our home planet of Manya, we do not bury our dead. It would be too disturbing an experience. You see, even though our brains might cease to function, our bodies remain capable of movement for some years. Admittedly there is no purpose behind the movements, but there is movement all the same. Could you lower your mother into her grave if she were still able to sit up, look around, wave her hands?

'I doubt it. My fellow Manyans were equally squeamish. Cowards and hypocrites that they are, they sent us here, where the planet would have devoured us. As I have already said, the planet is alive. Because it is alive it needs nourishment. The people of Manya feared that the planet might wither and die without nourishment. They were afraid that if the planet died it would upset the orbit of their own world and cast them into the cold dark

regions of space. And so they sent *us* here, our brothers and sisters and friends sent us here, as food for the planet.'

'Then why are you still here?'

'There was one who came here, Tantalog, who was not dead. Not only did his body function, but his brain did also. He was merely mute, but this had not deterred the others from sending him here. Tantalog watched the others being devoured by the plant life as he ran and hid for weeks to stay alive. And then one day, in the middle of a violent electrical storm, he noticed that the plants were still, that they were no longer hungry. He reasoned rightly that the planet survived on electricity and that we were just morsels, of little nutritional value.

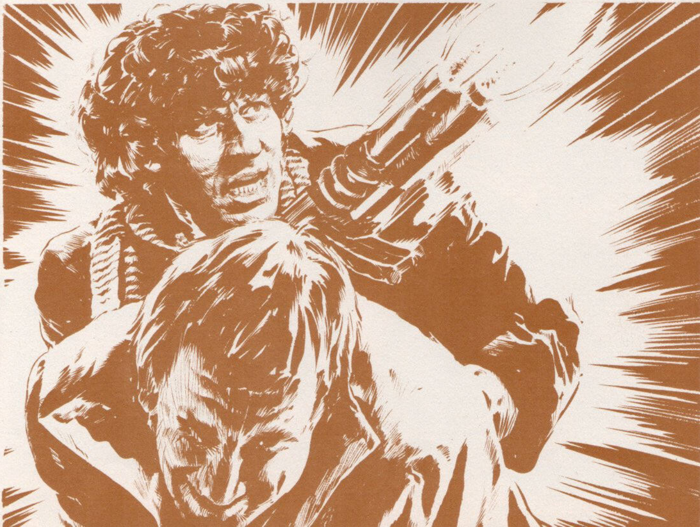
'Tantalog built a lightning conductor that went deep into the veins of this planet. From then on he was relatively safe, so long as he did not try to pick any fruits from the trees. Later he built a generator from the wrecks of the ships that brought us here. And then he began experimenting to see if he could sustain the other Manyans that had been sent here. What he needed was brains but there were none available. Eventually he discovered a crude means of tapping the magnetic energy of the planet to bring passing ships here. Using the brains of the occupants, he restored the mental powers of some of his fellow Manyans. They in turn helped improve his control over magnetism, and also helped him to reactivate still more Manyans.

'When my family and I were sent here after a Vapoural Regulo accident there were already hundreds of others, waiting to bring us to life. So long as the planet has electricity and we have a supply of brains and bodies, we will survive.' Akhemi paused. 'I think even *you* will agree that it is a most convincing example of Manyan adaptability.'

'It's absolutely unbelievable!' gasped Leela.

'As I've said before, the ability of the human mind to conceptualise is not a quality I admire. You say it is impossible and yet here we are, you say it is unbelievable and yet – KRAAOW!'

The sound was Akhemi's yelp of pain as the Doctor lashed out with his foot, sending the weapon spinning from his hand. He was onto it in a flash, but before he could get to his feet, Akhemi, Akhami and Ashad had all leapt onto him. Crawling along on his knees as the three Tantalogans pulled at his hair and bit at his neck he lifted the weapon up and pointed it at the white building on the hill. There was a flash, a rush



of wind and then a mighty bang. Pieces of metal and wood rained down on them.

With Leela's help, the Doctor managed to free himself from the Tantalogans' grip. He grabbed her hand and they ran, as fast as they could, through the house and into the garden.

'We must get back to the Tardis before it's too late,' panted the Doctor, and they set off again, crashing through the peaceful glades, trampling the flowers underfoot. At last they came to the clearing where the Tardis stood.

'Oh no!' cried Leela. 'We're too late.'

There, standing in front of the Tardis, holding a weapon in each hand, was Akhoomi, with Shem and Matabi on either side of him.

'Do not come any closer, Doctor, or I will be forced to shoot,' Akhoomi was calm and smiling.

Leela was livid. Their complacent, polite ways were just too incongruous with their horrific life style for her to contain herself any longer. With a cry of rage she rushed straight at them.

'Leela – no!'

But the Doctor's warning was too late. Already Akhoomi's fingers were activating the trigger-buttons.

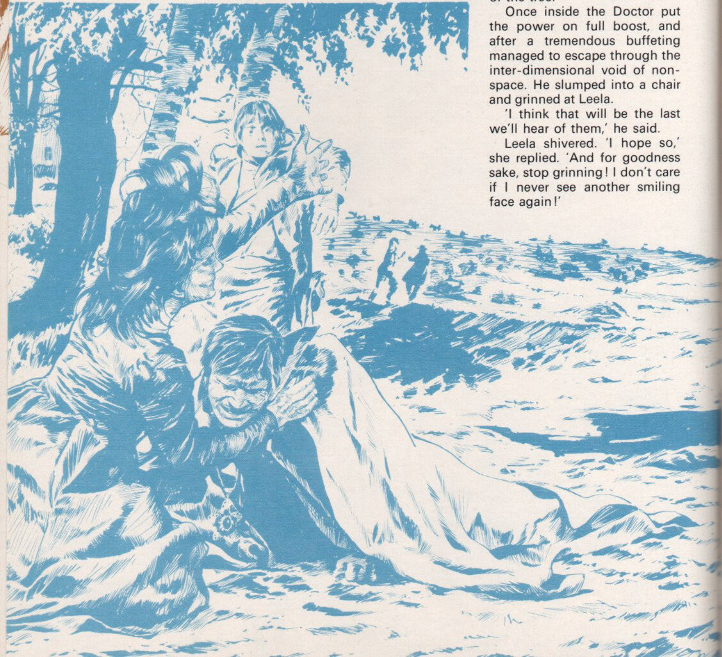
But then, before the weapon could fire, the tree behind Akhoomi suddenly bent forward and whisked him and his comrades into its branches, where it shook them like a dog shaking rats. The planet, with its electrical food supply cut off, was once again looking for morsels.

The Doctor felt the grass beneath his feet entwine itself around his shoe. Desperately he tore himself free and ran across the clearing. He opened the door to the Tardis and whisked Leela inside, inches ahead of the clutching branches of the tree.

Once inside the Doctor put the power on full boost, and after a tremendous buffeting managed to escape through the inter-dimensional void of non-space. He slumped into a chair and grinned at Leela.

'I think that will be the last we'll hear of them,' he said.

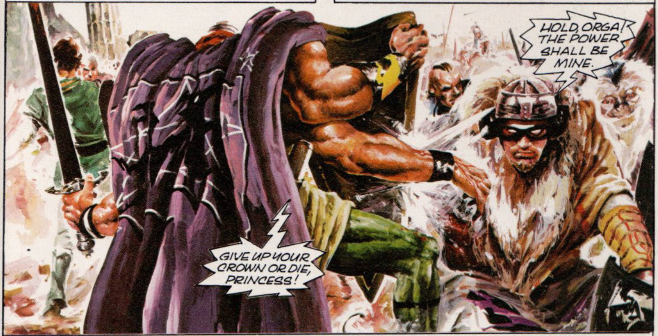
Leela shivered. 'I hope so,' she replied. 'And for goodness sake, stop grinning! I don't care if I never see another smiling face again!'



THE POWER

THE POWER – A STRANGE, UNSEEN FORCE THAT UNITES THE THREE SENTIENT LIFE FORMS ON THE PLANET SHEM. WHEN AZU, SUPREME RULER OF ALL SHEM, DIED, HE PASSED ON THE SECRET OF THE POWER TO HIS RIGHTFUL HEIR, THE PRINCESS AZULA...

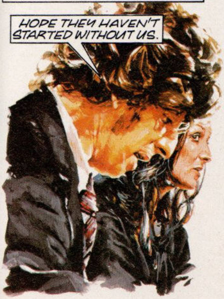
A CORONATION IS A HAPPY TIME, A TIME FOR REJOICING, FOR CELEBRATION, BUT FOR TWO RUTHLESS TRIBAL LEADERS, THE CROWNING OF PRINCESS AZULA IS A FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO SEIZE CONTROL FROM HER SOFT WHITE HANDS... FOR ARE THEY NOT STRONGER? ARE THEY NOT MORE AMBITIOUS? ARE THEY NOT READY TO KILL?


GIVE UP YOUR CROWN OR DIE, PRINCESS!
HOLD, ORGA! THE POWER SHALL BE MINE.

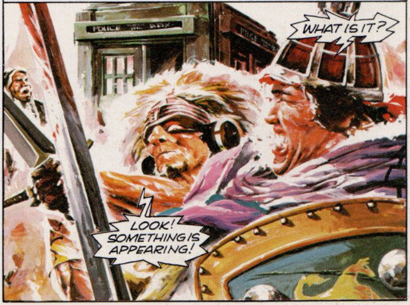
THE CONTESTANTS: ORGA, LEADER OF THE MONASHEM, ZIG, LEADER OF THE PAGASHEM, AZULA, HEIR TO THE THRONE OF SHEM.

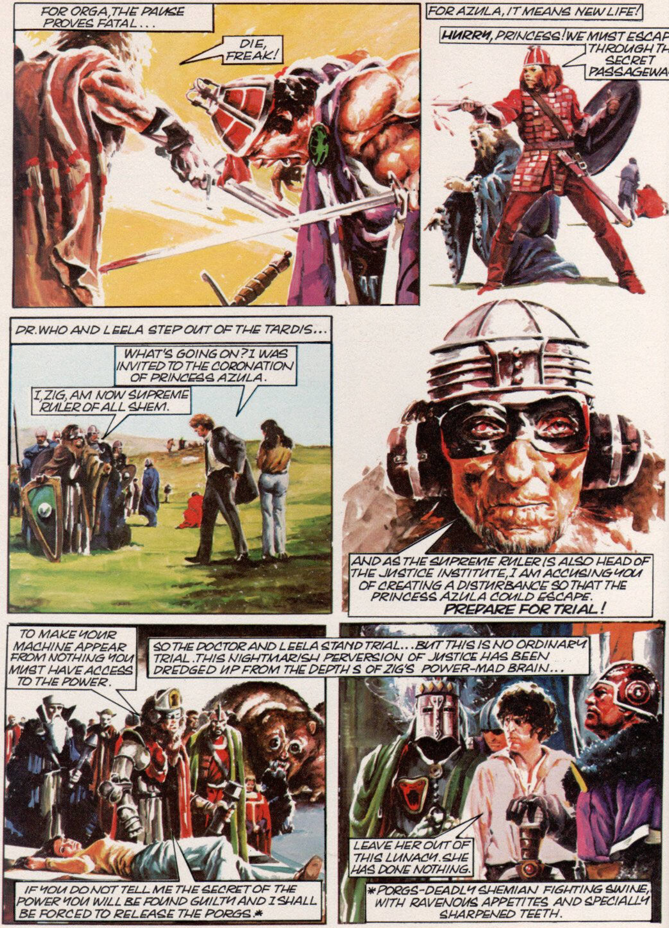
THE PRIZE: **THE POWER!**

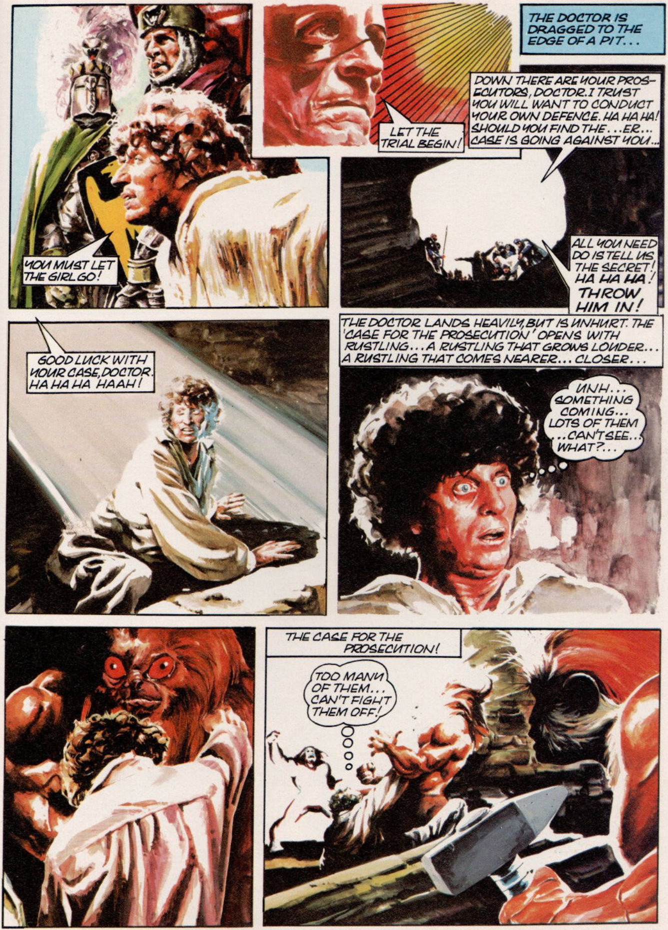
BUT ONE GUEST IS LATE IN ARRIVING...

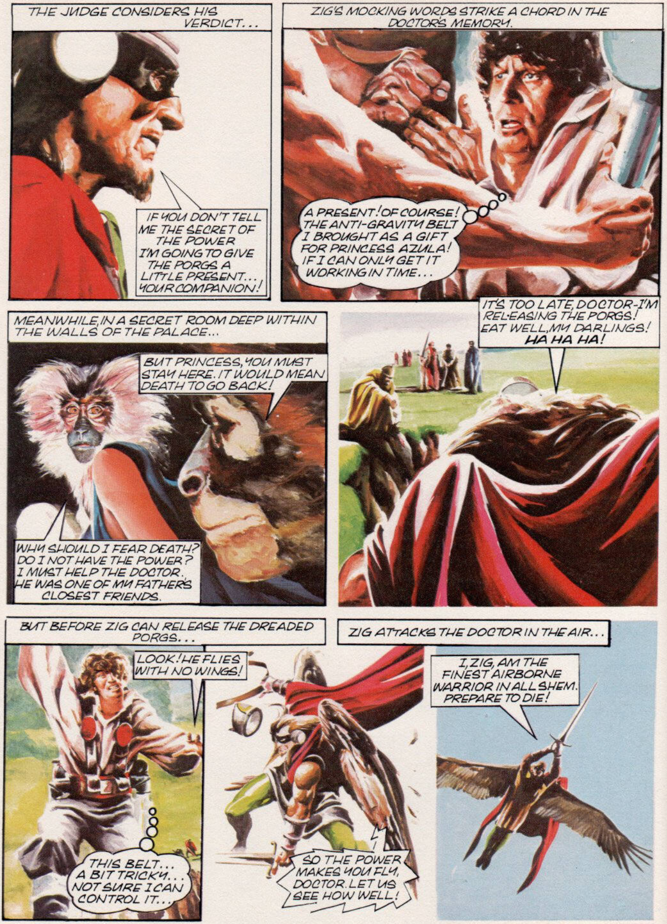

HOPE THEY HAVEN'T STARTED WITHOUT US.

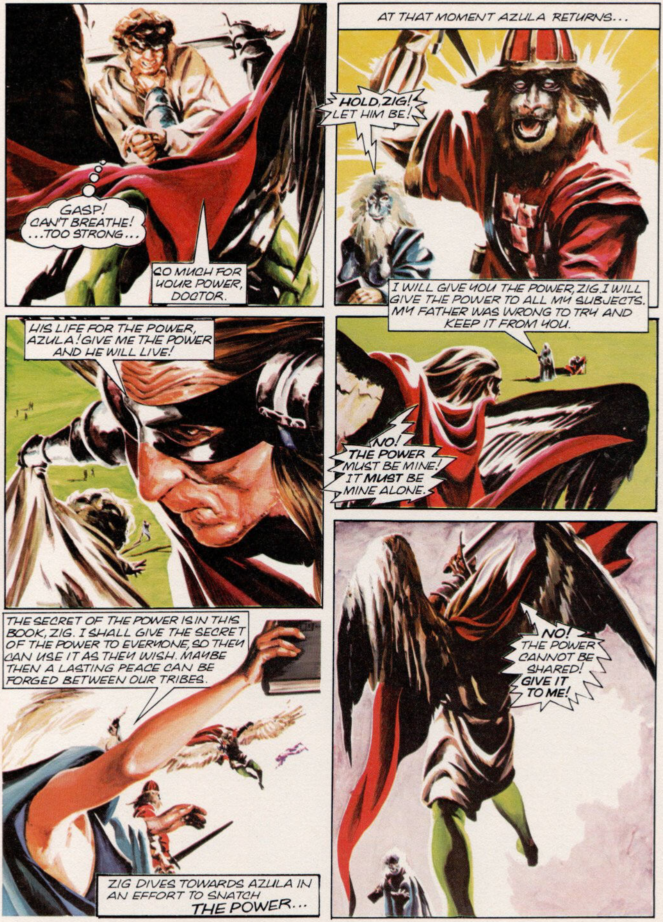
THE SUDDEN ARRIVAL OF THE TARDIS DISTRACTS THE DUELLING SHEMITES...

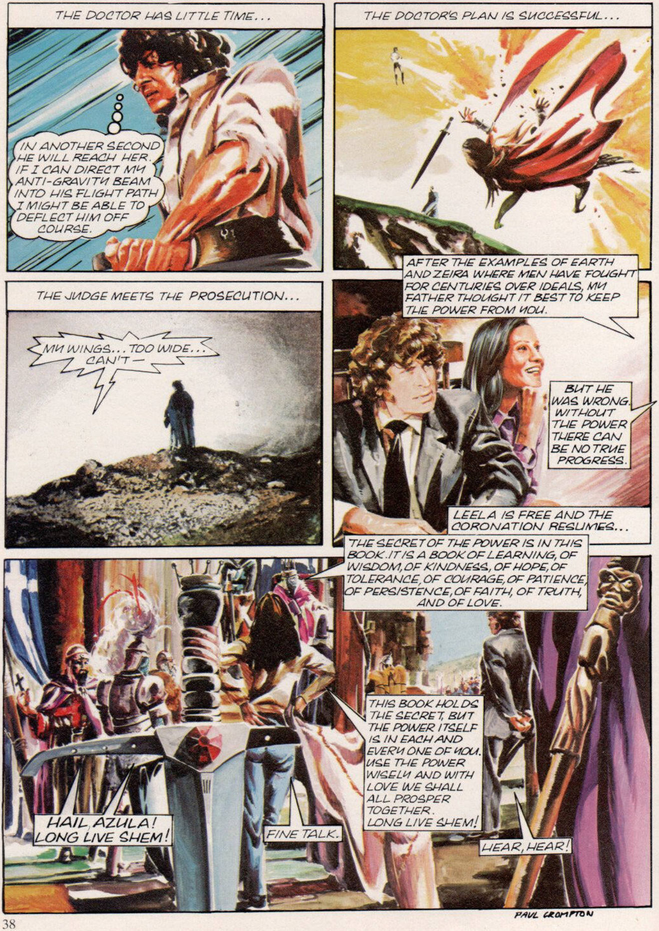

WHAT IS IT?
LOOK! SOMETHING IS APPEARING!


FOR ORGA, THE PAUSE PROVES FATAL...
DIE, FREAK!
FOR AZULA, IT MEANS NEW LIFE!
HURRY, PRINCESS! WE MUST ESCAPE THROUGH THE SECRET PASSAGEWAY!
DR. WHO AND LEELA STEP OUT OF THE TARDIS...
WHAT'S GOING ON? I WAS INVITED TO THE CORONATION OF PRINCESS AZULA.
I, ZIG, AM NOW SUPREME RULER OF ALL SHEM.
AND AS THE SUPREME RULER IS ALSO HEAD OF THE JUSTICE INSTITUTE, I AM ACCUSING YOU OF CREATING A DISTURBANCE SO THAT THE PRINCESS AZULA COULD ESCAPE. **PREPARE FOR TRIAL!**
SO THE DOCTOR AND LEELA STAND TRIAL... BUT THIS IS NO ORDINARY TRIAL. THIS NIGHTMARISH PERVERSION OF JUSTICE HAS BEEN DREDGED UP FROM THE DEPTHS OF ZIG'S POWER-MAD BRAIN...
TO MAKE YOUR MACHINE APPEAR FROM NOTHING YOU MUST HAVE ACCESS TO THE POWER.
IF YOU DO NOT TELL ME THE SECRET OF THE POWER YOU WILL BE FOUND GUILTY AND I SHALL BE FORCED TO RELEASE THE PORGS.*
LEAVE HER OUT OF THIS LUNACY. SHE HAS DONE NOTHING.
*PORGS-DEADLY SHEMIAN FIGHTING SWINE, WITH RAVENOUS APPETITES AND SPECIALLY SHARPENED TEETH.


YOU MUST LET THE GIRL GO!
LET THE TRIAL BEGIN!
THE DOCTOR IS DRAGGED TO THE EDGE OF A PIT...
DOWN THERE ARE YOUR PROSECUTORS, DOCTOR. I TRUST YOU WILL WANT TO CONDUCT YOUR OWN DEFENCE. HA HA HA! SHOULD YOU FIND THE...ER... CASE IS GOING AGAINST YOU...
ALL YOU NEED DO IS TELL US THE SECRET! HA HA HA! THROW HIM IN!
GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR CASE, DOCTOR. HA HA HA HAAH!
THE DOCTOR LANDS HEAVILY, BUT IS UNHURT. THE 'CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION' OPENS WITH RUSTLING... A RUSTLING THAT GROWS LOUDER... A RUSTLING THAT COMES NEARER... CLOSER...
UNH... SOMETHING COMING... LOTS OF THEM ...CAN'T SEE... WHAT?...
THE CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION!
TOO MANY OF THEM... CAN'T FIGHT THEM OFF!


THE JUDGE CONSIDERS HIS VERDICT...
IF YOU DON'T TELL ME THE SECRET OF THE POWER I'M GOING TO GIVE THE PORGS A LITTLE PRESENT... YOUR COMPANION!
ZIG'S MOCKING WORDS STRIKE A CHORD IN THE DOCTOR'S MEMORY.
A PRESENT! OF COURSE! THE ANTI-GRAVITY BELT I BROUGHT AS A GIFT FOR PRINCESS AZULA! IF I CAN ONLY GET IT WORKING IN TIME...
MEANWHILE, IN A SECRET ROOM DEEP WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE PALACE...
BUT PRINCESS, YOU MUST STAY HERE. IT WOULD MEAN DEATH TO GO BACK!
WHY SHOULD I FEAR DEATH? DO I NOT HAVE THE POWER? I MUST HELP THE DOCTOR. HE WAS ONE OF MY FATHER'S CLOSEST FRIENDS.
IT'S TOO LATE, DOCTOR-I'M REL-EASING THE PORGS! EAT WELL, MY DARLINGS! HA HA HA!
BUT BEFORE ZIG CAN RELEASE THE DREADED PORGS...
LOOK! HE FLIES WITH NO WINGS!
THIS BELT... A BIT TRICKY... NOT SURE I CAN CONTROL IT...
SO THE POWER MAKES YOU FLY, DOCTOR. LET US SEE HOW WELL!
ZIG ATTACKS THE DOCTOR IN THE AIR...
I, ZIG, AM THE FINEST AIRBORNE WARRIOR IN ALL SHEM. PREPARE TO DIE!


GASP! CAN'T BREATHE! ...TOO STRONG...
SO MUCH FOR YOUR POWER, DOCTOR.
AT THAT MOMENT AZULA RETURNS...
HOLD, ZIG! LET HIM BE!
I WILL GIVE YOU THE POWER, ZIG. I WILL GIVE THE POWER TO ALL MY SUBJECTS. MY FATHER WAS WRONG TO TRY AND KEEP IT FROM YOU.
HIS LIFE FOR THE POWER, AZULA! GIVE ME THE POWER AND HE WILL LIVE!
NO! THE POWER MUST BE MINE! IT MUST BE MINE ALONE.
THE SECRET OF THE POWER IS IN THIS BOOK, ZIG. I SHALL GIVE THE SECRET OF THE POWER TO EVERYONE, SO THEY CAN USE IT AS THEY WISH. MAYBE THEN A LASTING PEACE CAN BE FORGED BETWEEN OUR TRIBES.
ZIG DIVES TOWARDS AZULA IN AN EFFORT TO SNATCH THE POWER...
NO! THE POWER CANNOT BE SHARED! GIVE IT TO ME!


THE DOCTOR HAS LITTLE TIME...
IN ANOTHER SECOND HE WILL REACH HER. IF I CAN DIRECT MY ANTI-GRAVITY BEAM INTO HIS FLIGHT PATH I MIGHT BE ABLE TO DEFLECT HIM OFF COURSE.
THE DOCTOR'S PLAN IS SUCCESSFUL...
THE JUDGE MEETS THE PROSECUTION...
MY WINGS... TOO WIDE... CAN'T—
AFTER THE EXAMPLES OF EARTH AND ZEIRA WHERE MEN HAVE FOUGHT FOR CENTURIES OVER IDEALS, MY FATHER THOUGHT IT BEST TO KEEP THE POWER FROM YOU.
BUT HE WAS WRONG. WITHOUT THE POWER THERE CAN BE NO TRUE PROGRESS.
LEELA IS FREE AND THE CORONATION RESUMES...
THE SECRET OF THE POWER IS IN THIS BOOK. IT IS A BOOK OF LEARNING, OF WISDOM, OF KINDNESS, OF HOPE, OF TOLERANCE, OF COURAGE, OF PATIENCE, OF PERSISTENCE, OF FAITH, OF TRUTH, AND OF LOVE.
HAIL, AZULA! LONG LIVE SHEM!
FINE TALK.
THIS BOOK HOLDS THE SECRET, BUT THE POWER ITSELF IS IN EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU. USE THE POWER WISELY AND WITH LOVE WE SHALL ALL PROSPER TOGETHER. LONG LIVE SHEM!
HEAR, HEAR!
PAUL CROMPTON

FLASHBACK

For the tenth time in as many minutes, Tay looked at the time dial and sighed. The morning was really dragging, and the fact that for the first time in six decacycles he had nothing to do made it even worse. He looked at his two companions. They too were bored and restless, although Zak was making a show of checking the instruments for the umpteenth time.

The fact was, everything was working perfectly. Everything was ready for the replacement crew—when they arrived. Tay looked longingly at the red and green sphere of Pendor, glowing hazily through the window. At last he was going home, his six-decacycle stint in the beacon ship over. Zak and Able were good fellows, but their company did begin to pall after such a long time.

Suddenly the silence was broken by a high-pitched sound, and a flashing light began to move across the scanner screen.

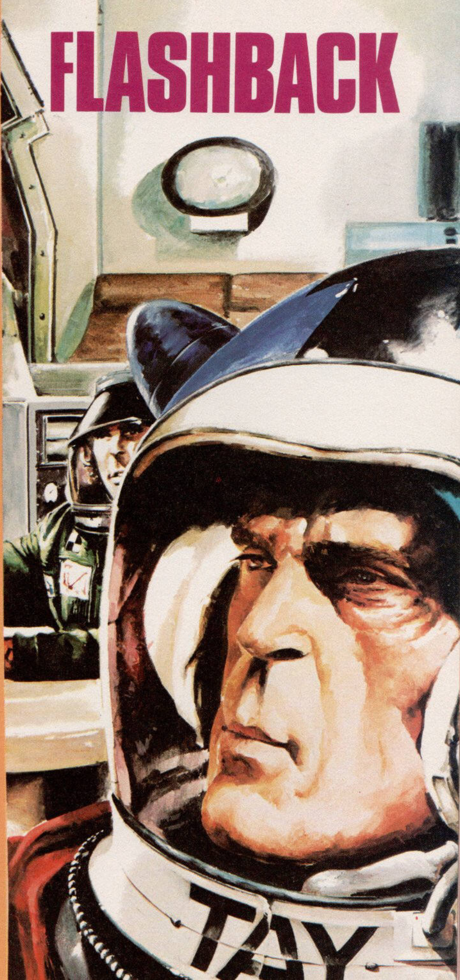
"At last!" said Zak. "I thought they would never get here!" Tay gave a shout of joy, and even Able, the quietest member of the crew, did a little dance round his chair.

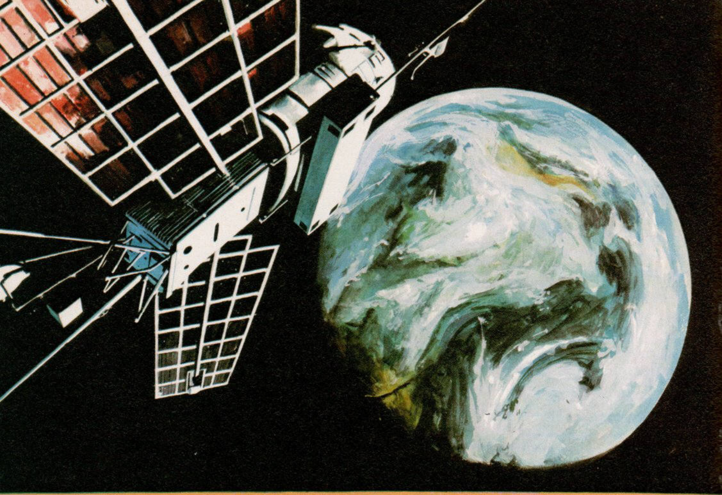
Tay prepared the landing bay for the relay ship, then he collected his luggage and joined Zak and Able in the reception area. They watched the small ship complete the docking manoeuvre and made their way to the landing bay. The doors of the ship opened slowly, the ramp slid down, and the new crew appeared. But they weren't alone . . . .

"According to my calculations we should be approaching Pendor and will arrive . . . now!" The Doctor released the control and gradually the noise inside the Tardis faded.

Leela stretched like a cat after a long sleep.

"Are you sure that you will be remembered after all this time?" she asked. "After all, most of the Pendorians you knew will surely be dead by now."





"Nonsense!" grinned the Doctor. "Pendorians live for an average of two hundred years, and my friends will hardly have aged at all." He opened the door and stepped out. "Hmmm, we seem to be in some kind of laboratory," he mused, looking round at the banks of tapes and dials. "Ah well, we'll soon find out where we are. Follow me."

He moved confidently past the gleaming machinery, but Leela was more cautious. She trod softly, her eyes moving from left to right as she crept along, her hand on her knife.

It was an L-shaped room, and as the Doctor disappeared round the corner Leela was startled to hear him groan, "Oh no!" Thinking he was in trouble she ran round the corner, only to find him staring out of a large round window.

"Do not frighten me like that!" she said crossly. "I thought that something terrible had happened!"

"Oh, but it has, dear girl, it has," said the Doctor, and he pointed out of the window. "You see that planet out there?" He indicated a planet surrounded by wisps of red and green cloud. "That is Pendor."

"In that case, would you mind telling me where we are?" said Leela, tartly. She felt uncomfortable, and was sure that someone would find them at any moment.

"Looking at these dials I would say that we are on a Pendorian beacon ship. A sort of cosmic lighthouse-cum-weather balloon—very useful when you consider how many ships the Pendorians have in orbit at one time. They can control their own weather too, so you needn't worry about the climate when we get there."

"*When* we get there," said Leela, pointedly.

The Doctor grinned. "Oh, come now, where's your spirit of adventure? There should be a crew somewhere, and it puzzles me that they're not attending to their instruments. I think it's time we did a little exploring, don't you?"

They searched the top two levels of the ship without success, and Leela was all for going back to the Tardis, but the Doctor insisted on trying level three. "Something must have happened to the crew," he said. "The Pendorians would never leave an important ship like this unattended."

Level three appeared to be just as deserted as the other two, until they came to a door marked: LANDING BAY. WHEN RED LIGHT FLASHES DO NOT ENTER. The red light was flashing now, but as soon as it stopped the Doctor opened the door.

It opened onto a glass-fronted balcony above the landing area and below them the Doctor and Leela could see the reason for the red light. A small spaceship had docked with the beacon ship, and four men were walking down the ramp. The first three all looked very similar —tall, well-built and dressed in identical red uniforms. The last figure was very small by comparison, fat, with a shock of red hair and a metallic blue suit. Three more uniformed figures were waiting to greet them.

"I know that man!" whispered the Doctor, pointing to the small, blue-clad figure. "Now, where in the universe have I seen him before?" He closed his eyes in an effort to concentrate, and did not see a brilliant light on the man's wrist begin to flash with hypnotic regularity.

"Got it!" The Doctor slapped his leg in triumph. "His name is Skeeda and he was on trial for malpractice in his research into the subconscious the last time I visited Pendor. A nasty piece of work, but very clever if he could only have used his talents to do good . . . Leela, you're not listenening. Leela!"

He snapped his fingers in front of Leela's face . . .but she did not respond. Then the Doctor's eyes were drawn to the flashing light and realisation dawned. Quickly he turned the girl's face away from the light and slapped it hard. As she staggered under the blow, Leela's eyes flickered and she brought her hand up to her cheek. The Doctor relaxed and pulled her out of sight of the ship.

"Sorry about that," he said, "but you were almost hypnotised by that fat fiend down there."

Leela rubbed her face ruefully. "I am glad that I am on your side," she said.

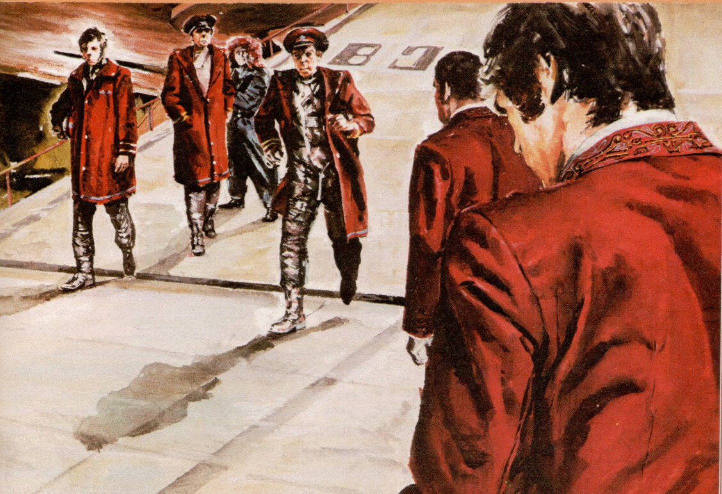
"My dear, it's the only place to be," murmured the Doctor, inching his way towards the edge of the balcony. He hid behind a tall, red-leaved plant and watched as Skeeda led the six crew members away from the landing bay.

"Get ready to follow them," he told Leela as the sound of of footsteps came nearer. She opened the door a fraction, and once the line of men had passed they slipped out into the corridor.

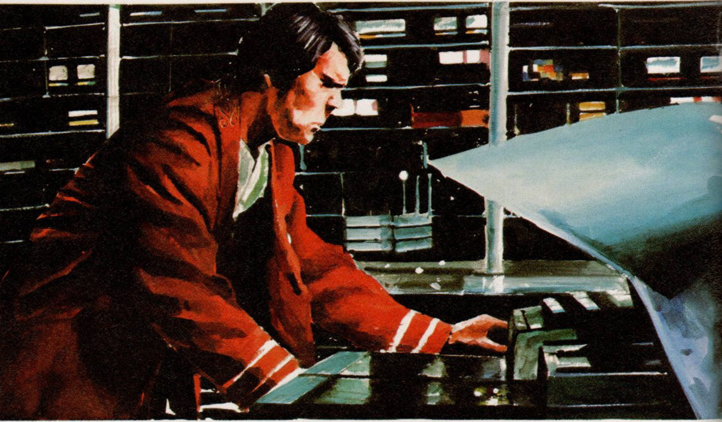
Ahead of them, Skeeda was struggling to keep up with the long strides of the ship's crew, and the Doctor grinned. The little scientist had always been very touchy about his height —or lack of it—and in his his efforts to assert himself he had become more and more egotistical and, eventually, unbalanced. Remembering this side of the man's character the Doctor's face sobered and he motioned to Leela to keep close by him.

The crew marched on like automatons until they reached level one, and here Skeeda called a halt. The light on his wrist began to flash again, and the Doctor pulled Leela into a doorway as he began to speak.

"Now then, you great lanky hunks of ignorance, listen



closely to me." Skeeda puffed out his chest and a fanatical gleam crept into his eyes. "You are now *completely* under my power and will do *exactly* as I say. When the light stops flashing you will continue with your duties, but with a *vital* difference. From now on you will cause as much *havoc* and *destruction* as you can! You will *disrupt* space traffic with false information and you will *destroy* the climate on Pendor with as many storms, hurricanes, droughts and earthquakes as you can. I'll teach those Pendorian prudes to outlaw me!"



Skeeda's voice had risen to a mad shriek and his fat body trembled with rage. Switching off the light on his wrist he sent the crew to their posts.

One of them was heading for the very doorway that sheltered Leela and the Doctor. Quickly the Doctor pulled Leela into the room and they looked round desperately for somewhere to hide. Like all the other rooms on level one it was lined with banks of whirring tapes and rows of dials, and the only possible cover was a tall cabinet jutting out at right angles to the wall.

They dived behind it just as the door opened, and held their breath as the red-uniformed figure marched in. He muttered to himself as he passed them, and every so often he would frown, as if he was trying to remember something. "Havoc . . . destruction . . . storms . . . can't do it . . . mustn't. . . ."

The Doctor's mind was racing. Unless he managed to stop him, this man would soon be changing the entire Pendorian climate, disrupting the lives of millions of innocent people. He thought of the other five men who were even now sending out wrong information to the many spaceships, causing who knew what disruption—even death. He must act quickly.

From his hiding place he could see a white light that showed when the equipment was switched on. Suddenly he grinned, much to Leela's amazement. With a little alteration that light could be very useful . . .

The Pendorian was busy at the control desk and did not see the Doctor creep out from behind the cabinet. Taking a small screwdriver from his pocket, the Doctor silently removed a panel below the light and began to poke around among the tangle of wires. The light went out. Still he worked, glancing over his shoulder every few seconds to make sure that he hadn't been seen.

The light began to flicker, then it flashed, slowly at first, but faster and faster as the Doctor turned the screwdriver. "There, that should do it," he said loudly.

Still hidden behind the cabinet, Leela couldn't believe her ears. Did the Doctor want the Pendorian to hear him and raise the alarm?

"Don't look so surprised," said the Doctor cheerfully.

But Leela, convinced that he

had gone mad, took out her knife and prepared to fight.

Disturbed by the Doctor's voice, the Pendorian was coming towards them, his lethal-looking weapon in his hand. Leela tensed herself for the attack . . . but it never came. The tall figure was staring at the flashing light as if transfixed, and gradually his face relaxed and his eyes blinked rapidly.

"What the—what am I doing here? I should be at the landing bay! And who are you? What's going on here?" Tay was very confused.

The Doctor introduced himself, and quickly explained about Skeeda and his plan. But the Pendorian was suspicious. "How do I know that this isn't a trick?" he said.

"Just look at what you've done to the Pendorian climate if you don't believe me," said the Doctor grimly.

Sure enough, the instrument readings showed the formation of hurricanes, snow storms, earth tremors and tidal waves, and although Tay managed to halt the worst of it, Pendor would still be in for some very rough weather conditions.

"And that's not all," said the Doctor. "Even now, the rest of your team is stirring up more delights for that madman, Skeeda."

"We must stop them at once!" gasped a horrified Tay.

"Yes, but how?" said Leela.

"Leave it to me," said the Doctor, with a conspiratorial wink. "I have a plan. . . ."

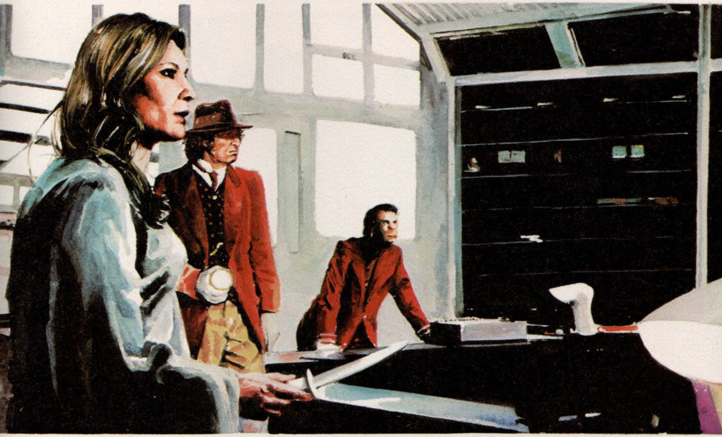
Meanwhile, Skeeda was enjoying himself. He had these Pendorian beanpoles exactly where he wanted them, and soon the chaos on Pendor would be complete. Two members of the crew were about to destroy the atmospheric layer that protected the planet from heavy radiation bombardment; another was sending out misleading signals to space traffic; while Zak and Able prepared the final blow: a message to each nation on Pendor that would have them declaring war on each other and, ultimately, destroy the entire planet.

Skeeda rubbed his fat hands together and chuckled, his three chins quivering as his body shook with laughter. The crew had signalled that they were ready for him—he wanted the pleasure of pressing the buttons himself—and he turned eagerly to the control panel.

As his hand poised in anticipation he was startled by a strange voice.

"Don't do it, Skeeda! You'll never get away with it!"

With a snarl the fat scientist spun round. "Seize them!" he screamed. "They won't stop me now!"



But as the crew rushed forward they were suddenly arrested by the flashing light in the Doctor's hand.

"You fools, what are you waiting for?" Skeeda's voice had risen to a wild shriek. "Nothing must come between me and my revenge!" But as he raised his hand to the controls, his eyes too were drawn to the flashing light, and his body froze rigid.

As the astonished crew members came to their senses, Tay quickly explained what had happened, and they immediately set about repairing as much of the damage as they could.

The Doctor concentrated on Skeeda, who was still staring fixedly at the flashing light, his eyes glazed, his mouth slack.

"Are you listening to me, Skeeda?" said the Doctor, softly.

The little fat man nodded, his eyes still on the light.

"You have been a naughty man, a very naughty man, but now you're going to be good, aren't you?" Skeeda nodded again.

"Listen carefully. These men have a busy time on this ship, and you could be very useful to them, preparing their meals, keeping their quarters tidy, and doing any little odd jobs for them.

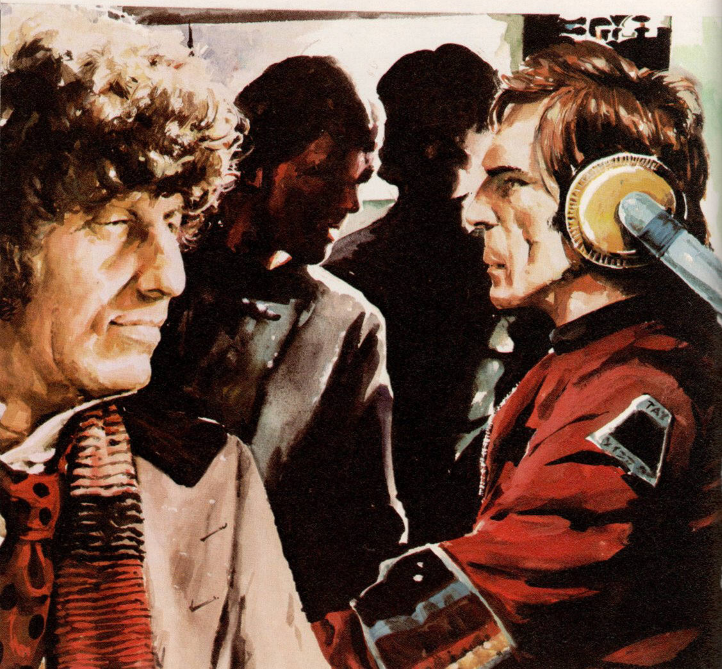
"From now on you will do exactly as they say, and you will forget that you were ever anything but their servant."

Skeeda's face assumed a vacant smile, and the Doctor switched off the light. Immediately the little man's eyes flicked wildly round the room.

"What am I doing here?" he said. "I should be getting a meal ready for those boys! They will be starving after that long journey!" And before the astonished eyes of the crew, he bustled out of the room, tutting to himself about failing in his duties.

Leela laughed. "The little fat man is very different now," she said. "How did you do it?"

"Oh, let's just say that I had a flash of inspiration," grinned the Doctor.

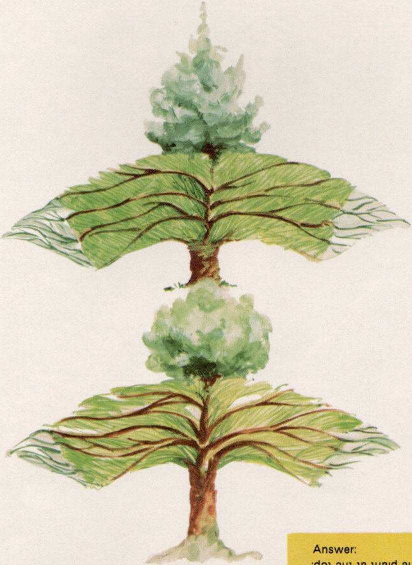


GUESSING THE GARZL

On the planet Gar, there are two main kinds of plants: the Garzl, a nourishing, sweet-tasting piece of protein, and the Garkl, a bitter and deadly poison. The only difference is that the Garzl is slightly bigger.

When stranded and starving on Gar, the Doctor had to make the choice between two of the plants. He survived—could you?

Which one of the plants is the Garzl?



Answer:

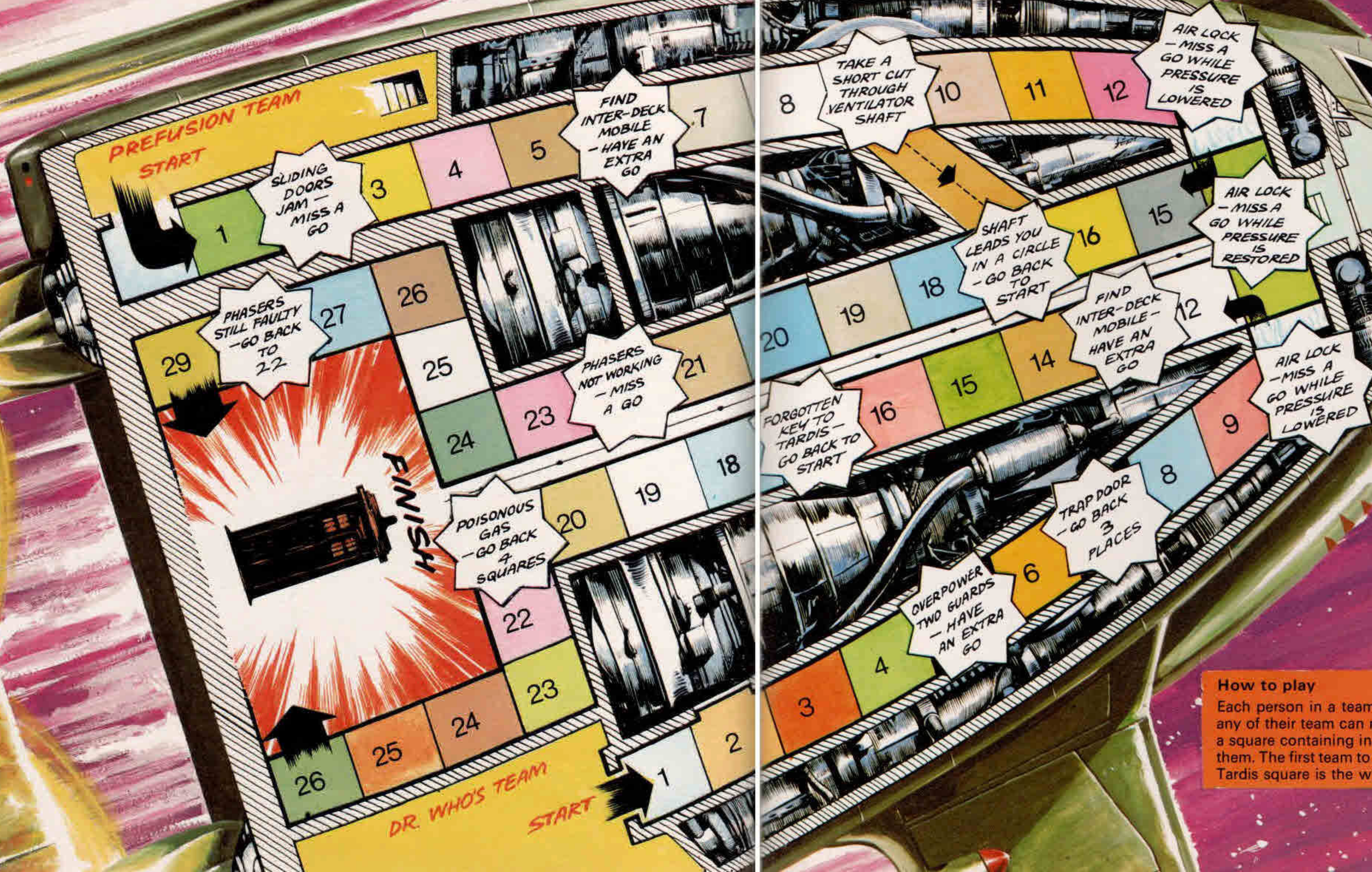
The Garzl is the plant at the top.

Prisoners of the Prefusions

The Doctor, Leela and a party of Earth scientists have been captured during a moon mission by the dreaded Prefusions, one-eyed monsters from the planet Prefus. With the help of the Doctor's sonic screwdriver they are released from their prison cell, but their only means of escape is the Tardis, which the Prefusions have placed at the centre of the spaceship. To reach the Tardis, the Doctor, Leela and the scientists must venture down the corridors of the spaceship whose hidden dangers could well destroy them. However, the Prefusions have picked up the escaping band on their monitor in the ship's control room and a band of Prefusion guards are speeding towards the Tardis from the opposite end of the ship. Who will reach the Tardis first? Play the game and find out.

What you need

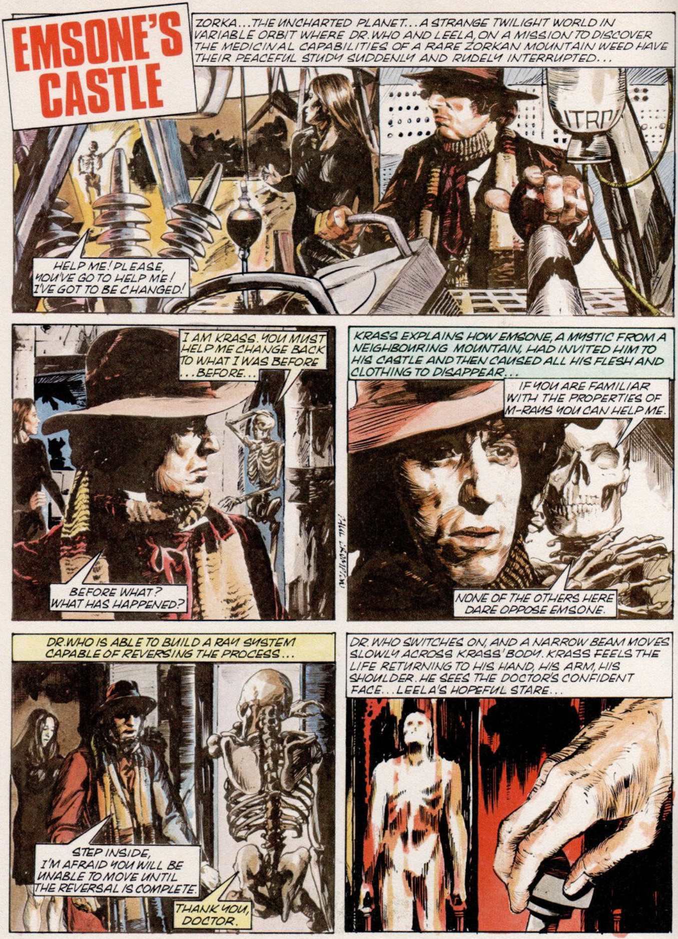
A dice
Different coloured counters
Two teams of equal numbers. One team represents the Prefusions and the other the Doctor and the scientists.

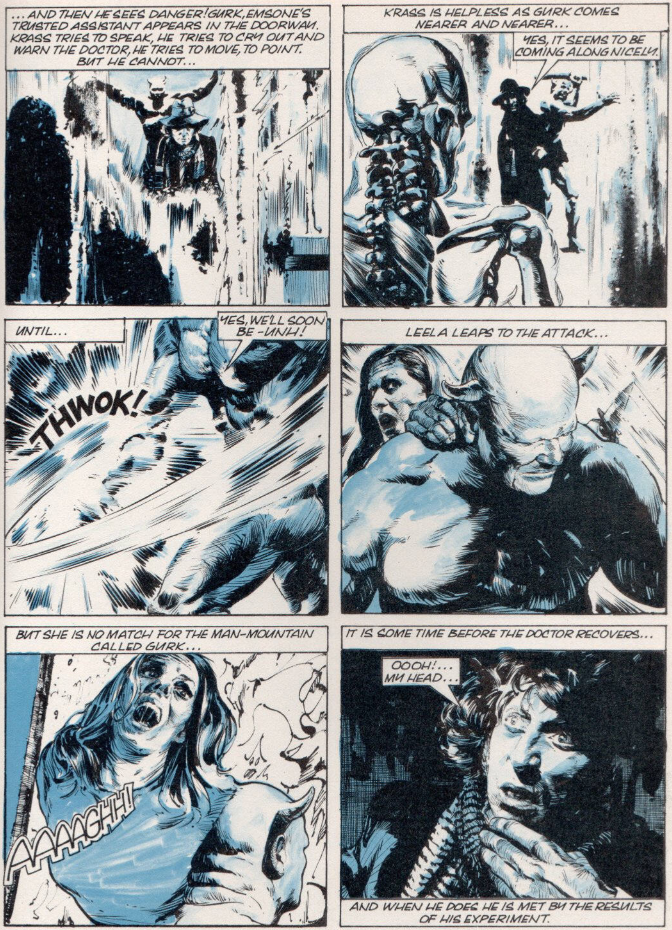

PREFUSION TEAM
START
1
SLIDING DOORS JAM — MISS A GO
3
4
5
FIND INTER-DECK MOBILE — HAVE AN EXTRA GO
7
8
TAKE A SHORT CUT THROUGH VENTILATOR SHAFT
10
11
12
AIR LOCK — MISS A GO WHILE PRESSURE IS LOWERED
AIR LOCK — MISS A GO WHILE PRESSURE IS RESTORED
15
16
SHAFT LEADS YOU IN A CIRCLE — GO BACK TO START
18
19
20
21
PHASERS NOT WORKING — MISS A GO
23
24
25
26
27
PHASERS STILL FAULTY — GO BACK TO 22
29
FINISH
DR. WHO'S TEAM
START
1
2
3
4
OVERPOWER TWO GUARDS — HAVE AN EXTRA GO
6
TRAP DOOR — GO BACK 3 PLACES
8
9
AIR LOCK — MISS A GO WHILE PRESSURE IS LOWERED
FIND INTER-DECK MOBILE — HAVE AN EXTRA GO
12
14
15
16
FORGOTTEN KEY TO TARDIS — GO BACK TO START
18
19
20
POISONOUS GAS — GO BACK 4 SQUARES
22
23
24
25
26

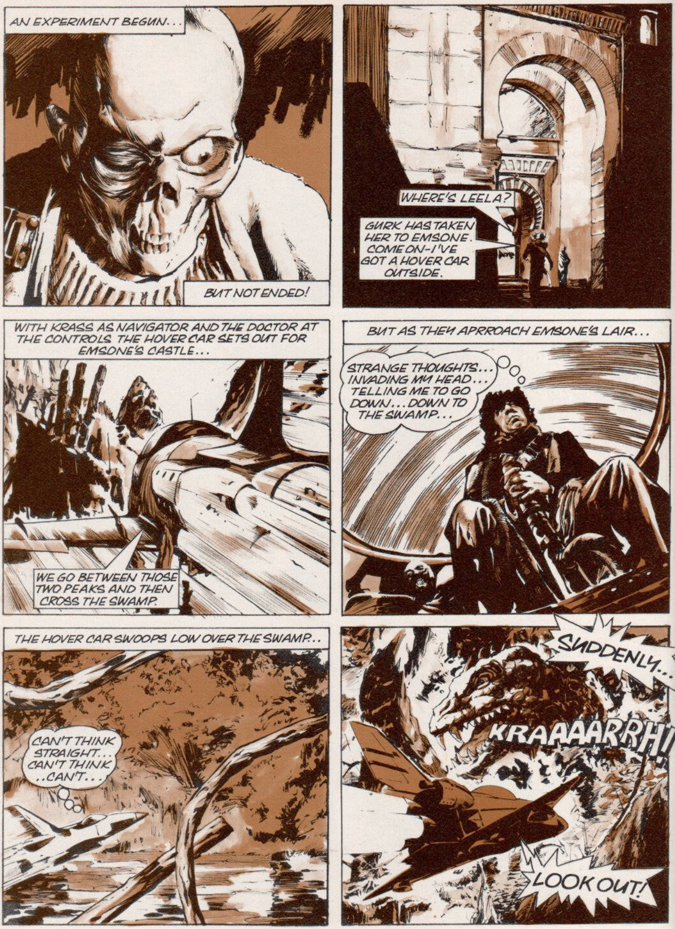
How to play

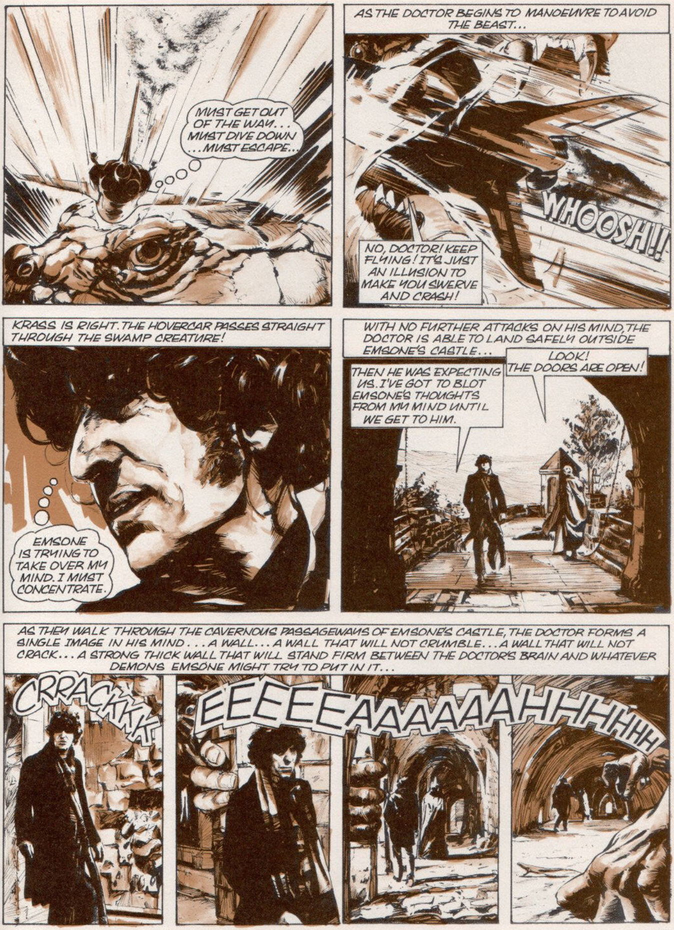
Each person in a team *must* throw a six before any of their team can move. If a player lands on a square containing instructions he *must* follow them. The first team to get all its members on the Tardis square is the winner.

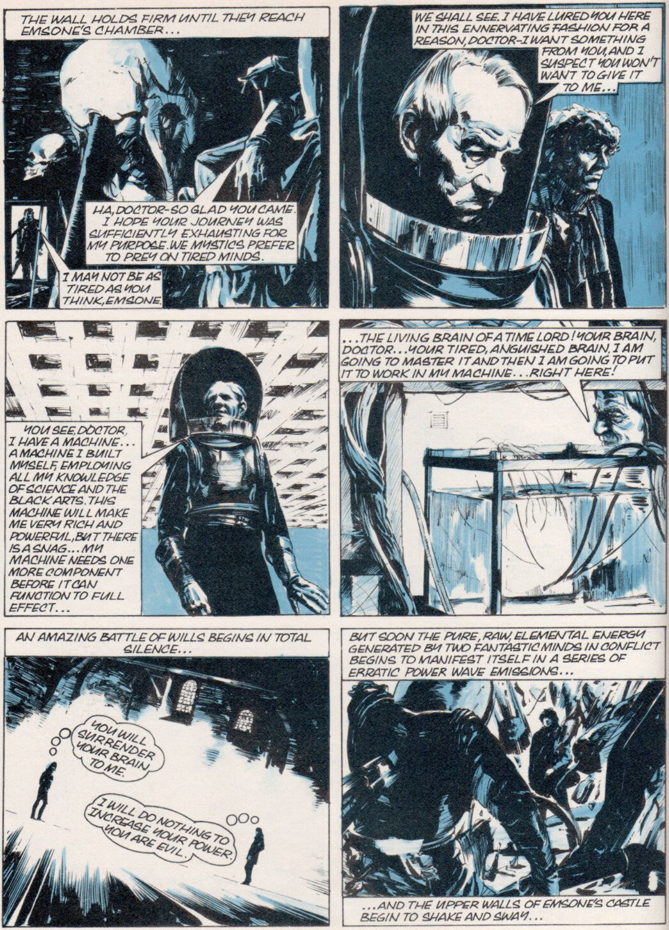
EMSONE'S CASTLE

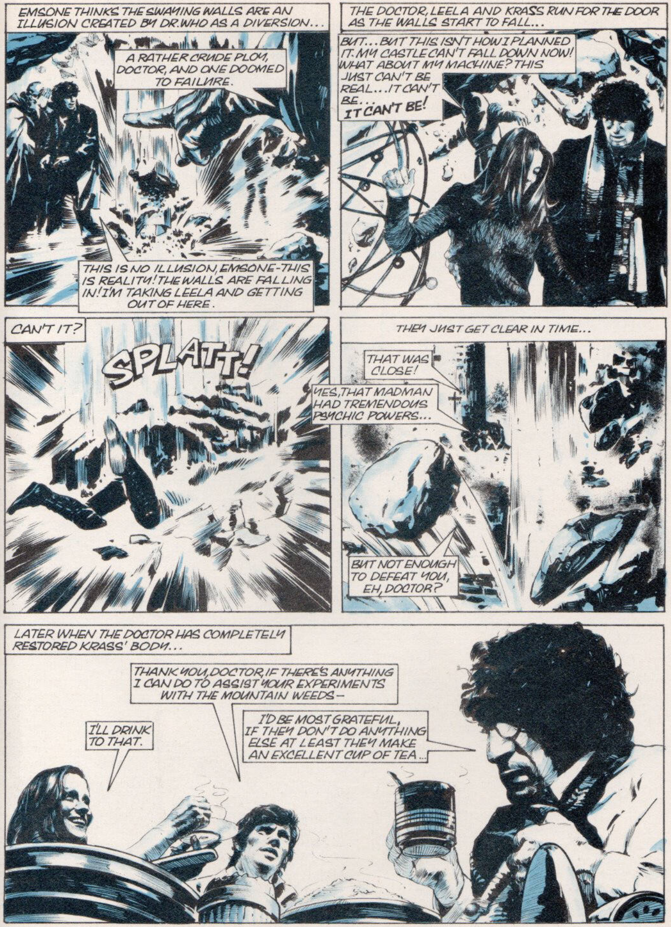

ZORKA...THE UNCHARTED PLANET...A STRANGE TWILIGHT WORLD IN VARIABLE ORBIT WHERE DR. WHO AND LEELA, ON A MISSION TO DISCOVER THE MEDICINAL CAPABILITIES OF A RARE ZORKAN MOUNTAIN WEED HAVE THEIR PEACEFUL STUDY SUDDENLY AND RUDELY INTERRUPTED...
HELP ME! PLEASE, YOU'VE GO TO HELP ME! I'VE GOT TO BE CHANGED!
ITRO
I AM KRASS. YOU MUST HELP ME CHANGE BACK TO WHAT I WAS BEFORE ...BEFORE...
BEFORE WHAT? WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
KRASS EXPLAINS HOW EMSONE, A MYSTIC FROM A NEIGHBOURING MOUNTAIN, HAD INVITED HIM TO HIS CASTLE AND THEN CAUSED ALL HIS FLESH AND CLOTHING TO DISAPPEAR...
IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE PROPERTIES OF M-RAYS YOU CAN HELP ME.
NONE OF THE OTHERS HERE DARE OPPOSE EMSONE.
DR. WHO IS ABLE TO BUILD A RAY SYSTEM CAPABLE OF REVERSING THE PROCESS...
STEP INSIDE, I'M AFRAID YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO MOVE UNTIL THE REVERSAL IS COMPLETE.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR.
DR. WHO SWITCHES ON, AND A NARROW BEAM MOVES SLOWLY ACROSS KRASS' BODY. KRASS FEELS THE LIFE RETURNING TO HIS HAND, HIS ARM, HIS SHOULDER. HE SEES THE DOCTOR'S CONFIDENT FACE...LEELA'S HOPEFUL STARE...

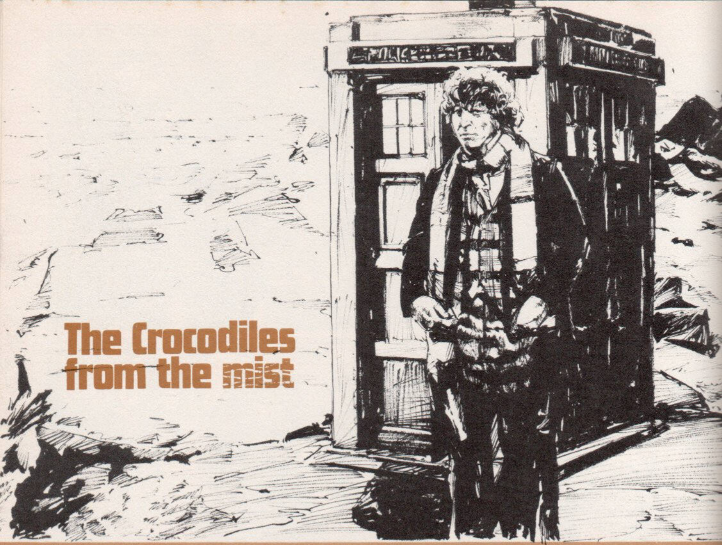

... AND THEN HE SEES DANGER! GURK, EMSONE'S TRUSTED ASSISTANT APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY. KRASS TRIES TO SPEAK, HE TRIES TO CRY OUT AND WARN THE DOCTOR, HE TRIES TO MOVE, TO POINT. BUT HE CANNOT...
KRASS IS HELPLESS AS GURK COMES NEARER AND NEARER...
YES, IT SEEMS TO BE COMING ALONG NICELY.
UNTIL...
YES, WE'LL SOON BE -UNH!
THWOK!
LEELA LEAPS TO THE ATTACK...
BUT SHE IS NO MATCH FOR THE MAN-MOUNTAIN CALLED GURK...
AAAAGHH!
IT IS SOME TIME BEFORE THE DOCTOR RECOVERS...
OOOH!... MY HEAD...
AND WHEN HE DOES HE IS MET BY THE RESULTS OF HIS EXPERIMENT.


AN EXPERIMENT BEGUN...
BUT NOT ENDED!
WHERE'S LEELA?
GURK HAS TAKEN HER TO EMSONE. COME ON - I'VE GOT A HOVER CAR OUTSIDE.
WITH KRASS AS NAVIGATOR AND THE DOCTOR AT THE CONTROLS THE HOVER CAR SETS OUT FOR EMSONE'S CASTLE...
WE GO BETWEEN THOSE TWO PEAKS AND THEN CROSS THE SWAMP.
BUT AS THEY APPROACH EMSONE'S LAIR...
STRANGE THOUGHTS... INVADING MY HEAD... TELLING ME TO GO DOWN... DOWN TO THE SWAMP...
THE HOVER CAR SWOOPS LOW OVER THE SWAMP...
CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT... CAN'T THINK ..CAN'T...
SUDDENLY...
KRAAAARRH!!
LOOK OUT!


MUST GET OUT OF THE WAY... MUST DIVE DOWN ...MUST ESCAPE...
AS THE DOCTOR BEGINS TO MANOEUVRE TO AVOID THE BEAST...
WHOOSH!!
NO, DOCTOR! KEEP FLYING! IT'S JUST AN ILLUSION TO MAKE YOU SWERVE AND CRASH!
KRASS IS RIGHT. THE HOVERCAR PASSES STRAIGHT THROUGH THE SWAMP CREATURE!
EMSONE IS TRYING TO TAKE OVER MY MIND. I MUST CONCENTRATE.
WITH NO FURTHER ATTACKS ON HIS MIND, THE DOCTOR IS ABLE TO LAND SAFELY OUTSIDE EMSONE'S CASTLE...
THEN HE WAS EXPECTING US. I'VE GOT TO BLOT EMSONE'S THOUGHTS FROM MY MIND UNTIL WE GET TO HIM.
LOOK! THE DOORS ARE OPEN!
AS THEY WALK THROUGH THE CAVERNOUS PASSAGEWAYS OF EMSONE'S CASTLE, THE DOCTOR FORMS A SINGLE IMAGE IN HIS MIND... A WALL... A WALL THAT WILL NOT CRUMBLE... A WALL THAT WILL NOT CRACK... A STRONG THICK WALL THAT WILL STAND FIRM BETWEEN THE DOCTOR'S BRAIN AND WHATEVER DEMONS EMSONE MIGHT TRY TO PUT IN IT...
CRRACKKK!
EEEEEEAAAAAAAHHHHHH


THE WALL HOLDS FIRM UNTIL THEY REACH EMSONE'S CHAMBER...
HA, DOCTOR-SO GLAD YOU CAME. I HOPE YOUR JOURNEY WAS SUFFICIENTLY EXHAUSTING FOR MY PURPOSE. WE MYSTICS PREFER TO PREY ON TIRED MINDS.
I MAY NOT BE AS TIRED AS YOU THINK, EMSONE.
WE SHALL SEE. I HAVE LURED YOU HERE IN THIS ENNERVATING FASHION FOR A REASON, DOCTOR-I WANT SOMETHING FROM YOU, AND I SUSPECT YOU WON'T WANT TO GIVE IT TO ME...
YOU SEE, DOCTOR, I HAVE A MACHINE... A MACHINE I BUILT MYSELF, EMPLOYING ALL MY KNOWLEDGE OF SCIENCE AND THE BLACK ARTS. THIS MACHINE WILL MAKE ME VERY RICH AND POWERFUL, BUT THERE IS A SNAG... MY MACHINE NEEDS ONE MORE COMPONENT BEFORE IT CAN FUNCTION TO FULL EFFECT...
...THE LIVING BRAIN OF A TIME LORD! YOUR BRAIN, DOCTOR... YOUR TIRED, ANGUISHED BRAIN. I AM GOING TO MASTER IT AND THEN I AM GOING TO PUT IT TO WORK IN MY MACHINE... RIGHT HERE!
AN AMAZING BATTLE OF WILLS BEGINS IN TOTAL SILENCE...
YOU WILL SURRENDER YOUR BRAIN TO ME.
I WILL DO NOTHING TO INCREASE YOUR POWER. YOU ARE EVIL.
BUT SOON THE PURE, RAW, ELEMENTAL ENERGY GENERATED BY TWO FANTASTIC MINDS IN CONFLICT BEGINS TO MANIFEST ITSELF IN A SERIES OF ERRATIC POWER WAVE EMISSIONS...
...AND THE UPPER WALLS OF EMSONE'S CASTLE BEGIN TO SHAKE AND SWAY...


EMSONE THINKS THE SWAYING WALLS ARE AN ILLUSION CREATED BY DR.WHO AS A DIVERSION...
A RATHER CRUDE PLOY, DOCTOR, AND ONE DOOMED TO FAILURE.
THIS IS NO ILLUSION, EMSONE-THIS IS REALITY! THE WALLS ARE FALLING IN! I'M TAKING LEELA AND GETTING OUT OF HERE.
THE DOCTOR, LEELA AND KRASS RUN FOR THE DOOR AS THE WALLS START TO FALL...
BUT... BUT THIS ISN'T HOW I PLANNED IT. MY CASTLE CAN'T FALL DOWN NOW! WHAT ABOUT MY MACHINE? THIS JUST CAN'T BE REAL... IT CAN'T BE... IT CAN'T BE!
CAN'T IT?
SPLATT!
THEY JUST GET CLEAR IN TIME...
THAT WAS CLOSE!
YES, THAT MADMAN HAD TREMENDOUS PSYCHIC POWERS...
BUT NOT ENOUGH TO DEFEAT YOU, EH, DOCTOR?
LATER WHEN THE DOCTOR HAS COMPLETELY RESTORED KRASS' BODY...
THANK YOU, DOCTOR, IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO ASSIST YOUR EXPERIMENTS WITH THE MOUNTAIN WEEDS-
I'LL DRINK TO THAT.
I'D BE MOST GRATEFUL, IF THEY DON'T DO ANYTHING ELSE AT LEAST THEY MAKE AN EXCELLENT CUP OF TEA...



The Crocodiles from the mist

The Doctor whistled as he set the controls. Though he had done the same thing a thousand times before he still felt the old thrill deep in the pit of his stomach. Leela gazed with an amused smile at the animated Doctor's antics. His manner was brisk, efficient and excited. Her own senses were sharper than they had been, and she too felt the blood in her veins tingling with anticipation. It was always the same with a voyage into the unknown.

The Doctor checked the glittering lights on the central control panel, then touched the master switch. The hum of the Tardis grew louder, and the pitch rose off the scale of human hearing. The video screen flickered and went grey. They were off again.

"You're sure you've never been here before?"

"Never—at least not in the time we'll be landing in. I did monitor this solar system when it was relatively new, and from the chemicals there then . . ." He adjusted a large dial until two red, flickering lines merged as one. "I'd say we're in for a very interesting time."

"You think there'll be life there?"

"Of a sort. The third planet out from the larger of the two suns is our best bet for sentient life forms."

"And that's where we're going?"

"That's where we ARE."

The Doctor's long sensitive hands darted from switch to lever to button as the Tardis began to materialise on the planet he had chosen. The whine of the Tardis became audible again, and it slipped down the scale to the usual comforting hum. The Doctor and Leela waited for the video screen to come to life.

Leela groaned when the screen finally flickered on.

"Rain!"

The Doctor was studying some figures on the Atmosphere Evaluator.

"Of a slightly acidic nature as well, I'm afraid. You'd better cover up." He handed Leela a long black robe he had been given by the Olgan leader of Ankares 2.

Leela looked puzzled as she studied the strange garment. "There's two holes at the top and none at the sides."

"Yes, wonderful, isn't it? The Olgans are remarkable craftsmen, considering their physical differences." The Doctor flicked a little black switch and the doors of the Tardis slid open. He pulled his hat down firmly on his head and moved to the doorway.

There wasn't much to see, and what there was was distinctly depressing. The sky was a mass of heavy, rolling, dark blue clouds, and the ground was obscured by a thin green mist. In between there was rain. The Doctor stepped out and his feet sank into a springy, spongeous substance that oozed liquid over his shoes. He stepped back inside again.

"We'd better wait for a while. It should be getting lighter in a couple of hours."

The Doctor and Leela played chess while they waited for the weather to lift. The Doctor, despite his self-imposed handicap, won easily, but when they switched to draughts, Leela trounced him, laughing out loud as she ruthlessly destroyed each of his elaborate, ambitious ploys. The Doctor sat back and watched the video screen with a slight scowl on his face.

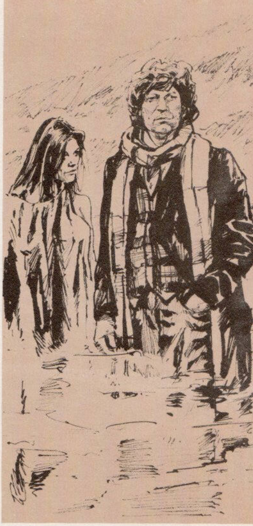
"At last!" he said as the dull orange sun peeped briefly through the clouds. "Daylight."

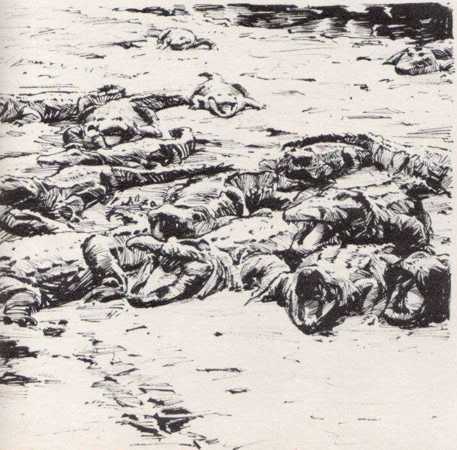
The Doctor and Leela stepped out of the Tardis. The rain had stopped, although the ground mist seemed thicker than before. Rising out of the mist some thirty yards away was a block of muddy ice, blackened by the lumps of soil and rock frozen deep into its sinister bulk. The Doctor walked towards it with Leela at his side.

"Doctor, look!" Leela grabbed the Doctor's arm and pointed to a similar frozen hill that had just come within sight. On top of it was a dark, twitching mass. The Doctor stepped forward and put his hand to his brow, squinting into the mist to try and make out exactly what the snape was.

"Get back to the Tardis, this might be dangerous."

Leela ignored the Doctor's instructions. Like him, she was fascinated by the living mound on the top of the hill. A great pile of what appeared to be crocodiles lay there unmoving, stacked at random on top of one another, their eyes open and unblinking, fixed firmly on the two strange visitors. With a lazy flick of its huge tail the creature on the top slithered down the pile and swished along the ground towards them, a thick, forked tongue darting in and out of its mouth.

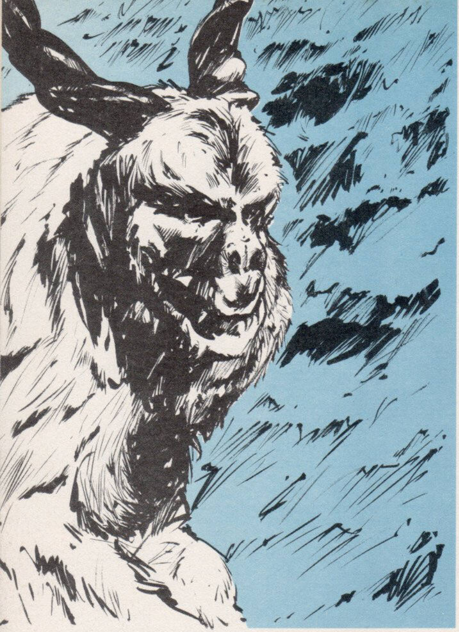




The Doctor noted that the creature had six legs and a rough, hooked projection at the end of its tail. Leela drew her dagger.

"Wait," said the Doctor, his fingers to his temples, his eyes screwed up with concentration.

The creature stopped about five yards from them. It opened its mouth as if it were yawning. There were no teeth, just long strands of cartilage similar to a whale's baleen. The Doctor stood his ground as the creature inched forward, head close to the ground, tongue flicking towards them as if trying to recognise them by smell. Leela stepped back as the cold, wet, slimy tongue brushed her leg. The Doctor smiled.



"Don't worry, he's only trying to be friendly."

Leela watched suspiciously as the creature walked slowly round her.

"How do you know?"

The Doctor tapped the side of his head.

"Telepathy . . . of a kind. Although he cannot communicate images, he seems adept at conveying an emotional state of mind."

"And just what is his emotional state of mind?"

"He's worried, but our arrival seems to have encouraged hope in his brain. I don't know why yet."

"Maybe these can tell."

Four large shapes were coming out of the mist, about fifteen feet above the ground. As they swooped down to land, the Doctor smiled. Part bird and part bat, the massive flying animals flapped clumsily through the air, the furious beating of their wings making the Doctor grab his hat before it was blown from his head. As they neared the ground their spindly, triple-jointed legs began to move as if they were running. Their wide flat feet slapped onto the ground and they ran and skidded almost twenty yards, sending large showers of lime green liquid into the air.

Leela watched the birds until they finally managed to pull up and began to peck at the ground with their long hooked beaks.

The Doctor's hands were back on his temples and the look of concentration had returned to his face. The appearance of the birds had brought about a change in the space crocodile's emotional state. There was a feeling of warmth, of friendship even, towards the large birds, but there was also a feeling of fear. The crocodile looked towards the area the birds had come from and the Doctor felt the fear increase. He looked into the mist to see what was frightening the crocodile, but all he could see were some dull-coloured shrubs and the occasional icy mound. He began to walk in that direction, but the crocodile slid in front of him and barred his way, bombarding his brain with images of danger.

A sudden snarl from behind made the Doctor turn. A large, hairy, tusked creature was lumbering towards them, black lips drawn back to reveal two sets of long sharp teeth. The pile of crocodiles dispersed with loud splashing sounds. The hairy beast lurched closer to the Doctor, growling menacingly deep in its throat. As Leela edged forward at a crouch, her body as taut and tense as a coiled spring, her knife held forward, the tusked creature rushed at them.

As the creature leapt forward, Leela lashed out with her knife, wounding the roaring beast in the shoulder. It didn't even break its stride. With a careless shrug of its powerfully muscled hind quarters it leapt for the Doctor's throat. As the Doctor put up his arms to protect himself, his foot slipped on the soggy ground and he fell on his back. The creature landed full on his chest.

Leela raised her knife to strike again, but there was no need. The space crocodile, moving with amazing speed, squelched round in a semicircle and, with a flick of his heavy tail, struck out. He caught the slavering tusker on the shoulders and swept it from the Doctor's body.

The dazed creature, its ferocious teeth still bared, bristled all over and prepared to attack again. A second crocodile came wriggling out of the mist and struck it another damaging blow to the head. The creature gave a yelp of pain and its aggression suddenly vanished. Driven only by the desire to get away it galloped off in the direction from which the birds had appeared.

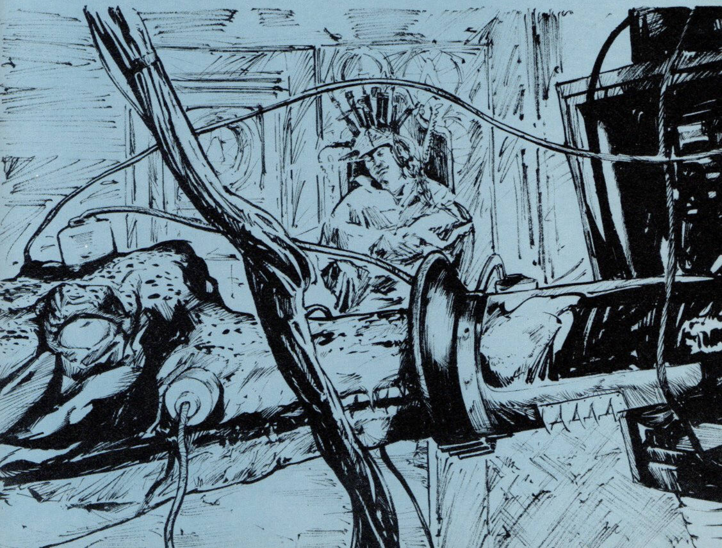
The Doctor raised himself up on one soaking elbow and watched the tusker run. As it disappeared into the mist he noticed that its gait was becoming increasingly clumsy and unsteady. It fell down, staggered to its feet and then stumbled onward out of sight.

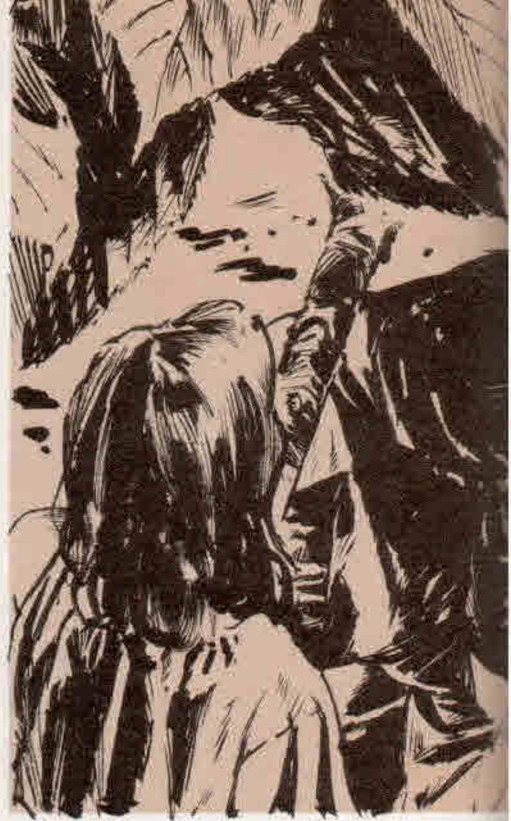
The Doctor turned to thank Leela for her actions, but was stopped by a loud, agonised roar that the Doctor recognised from countless other similar roars he had heard through his travels—the cry of an animal about to die. There were some subdued whimpers and then silence. The Doctor rang the liquid from the end of his scarf.

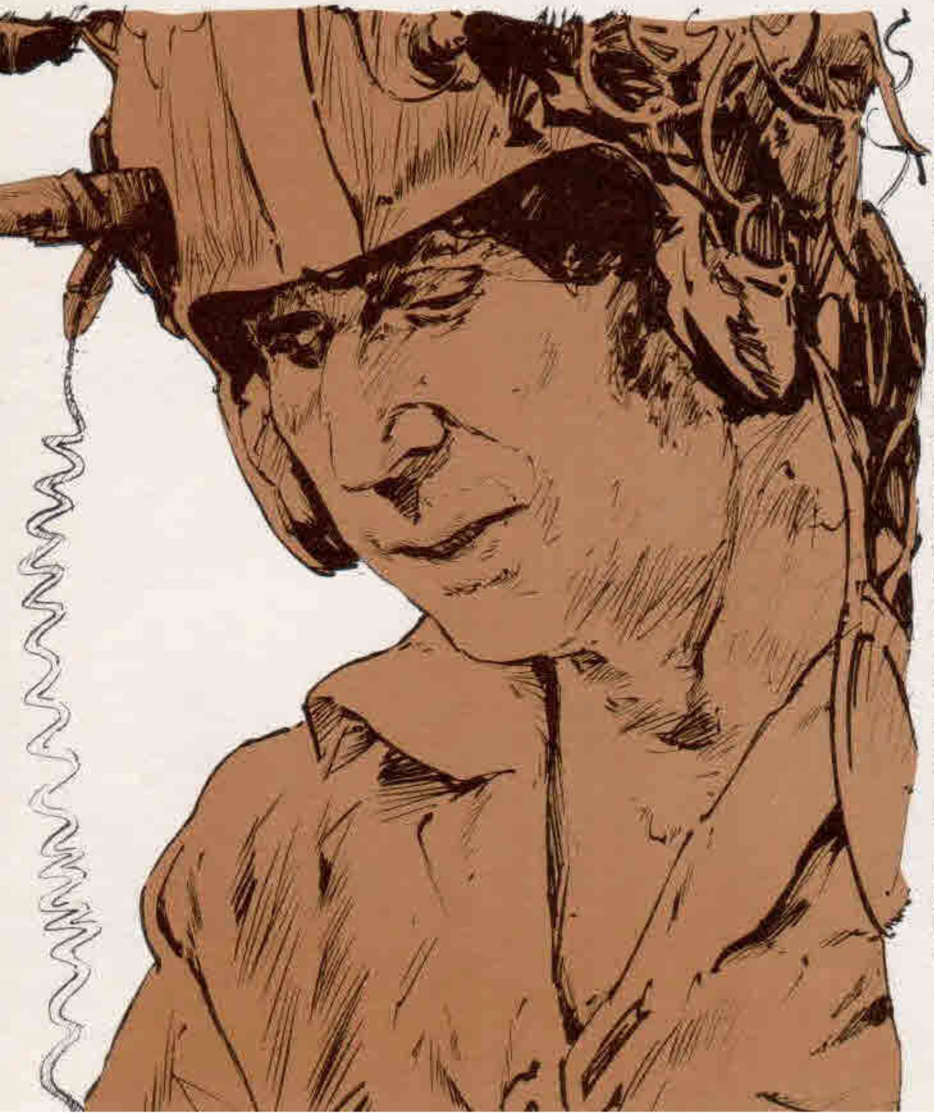
"I think it's time we tried to find out a little more about our friends here. Let's go back to the Tardis." He looked from Leela to the small crowd of space crocodiles that had gathered and smiled. There was no need to try and put his gratitude into words. He turned on his heel and they followed him as he led the way into the Tardis.

Once inside the Tardis, the Doctor set to work adapting his Mental Image Intensifier to use on the space crocodiles. He had first built the machine when studying the blurred, faint psychic emanations from the plant life of Ceras and had since improved its capacity to the extent that it was now capable of monitoring long range telepathic messages from the outer limits of space. Its performance was often erratic, due to some of the unstable elements present in the components, but with patient application and a little luck the Doctor was usually able to get it to function satisfactorily. He adjusted the muzzle on the crocodile's snout, checked the tiny gauges on the electrodes round its brain, then slipped a large helmet on his own head and settled down in a chair.

The images came slowly, and each simple, stylised picture the Doctor received was accompanied by the crocodile's emotional response. The Doctor felt the crocodile's wonder as he







stared at a light in the sky. He felt confusion as he saw an explosion near a small volcano. He felt fear as he watched crocodiles approaching an indistinct, mist-shrouded object before writhing in agony, then lying still. The crocodile repeated the images again and again, with an enduring forcefulness and clarity that made the Doctor determined to do everything in his powers to rid them of whatever it was that was threatening them.

But what WAS threatening them? The Doctor reasoned that whatever it was had come from the sky and that it was situated in a volcano near the spot where the tusked creature had died. If he wanted to find out what it was he would have to go there himself. But how? Just to approach whatever it was meant death.

And then the Doctor remembered the birds. They hadn't been affected. Was it something in their blood? Did they actually have any blood in their veins? Was it because they flew? He decided to investigate.

The Doctor took two samples of the green liquid, one from close to the danger area and one from some distance away. When gathering the second sample he came across a small clump of tall, stout pieces of wood, growing straight up out of the wet ground. They had bulbous swellings at the bottom that made them look like medieval lances stuck in the ground.

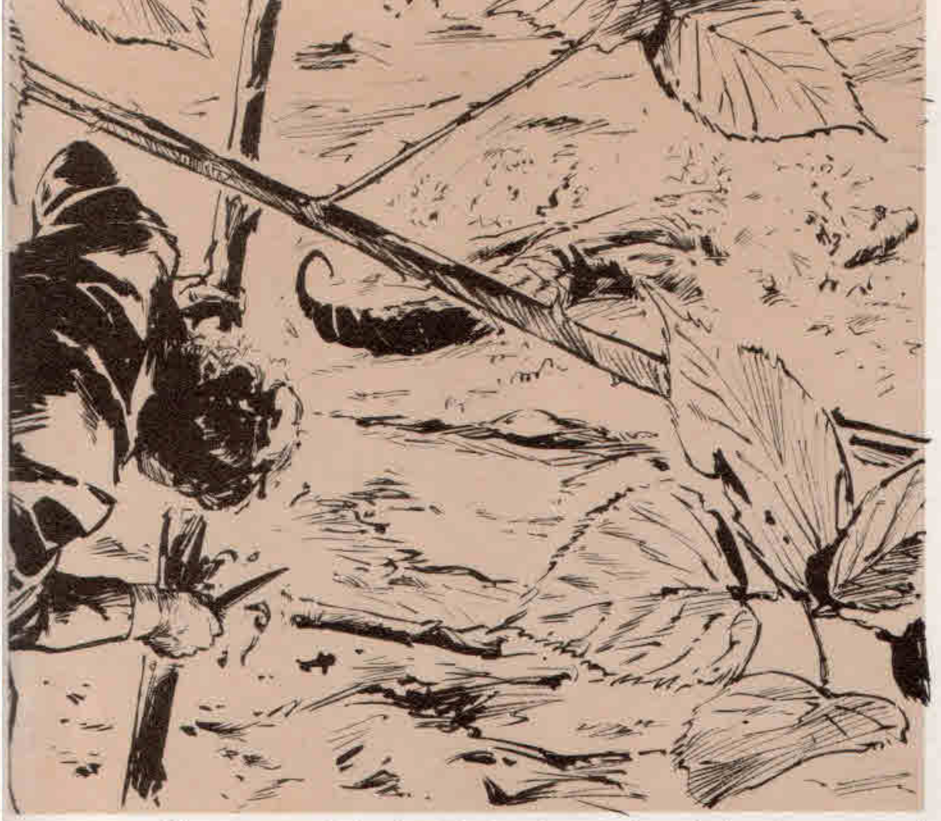
The Doctor took his samples back to the Tardis and ran them through an exhaustive series of tests.

The results fascinated him as a Doctor of Science, but their immediate implications disturbed him. Both samples of water were contaminated with a unique radioactive poison that in large doses killed in seconds, but which in small amounts absorbed over a period of time began to reverse the evolutionary processes. The levels in the two samples were different, indicating that the source of the poison was close to the low, almost flat volcano of the crocodile's mental projections. Something in that boiling mass of molten rock was emitting a toxic substance that was robbing the space crocodiles of the evolutionary progress they had made, driving them back into the primeval slime from which they had emerged. Whatever it was, the Doctor had to get it out without succumbing to its power. His mind went back to the stout wooden stalks he had seen when gathering his samples.

"How are you on stilts, Leela?"

Leela looked bewildered. The Doctor performed a short graphic mime of somebody walking on stilts. Leela clapped her hands with glee.

"Yes! Yes! I love kilts!"



The Doctor left the Tardis and returned carrying four of the stalks. By turning them upside down, cutting a ledge into the bulbous parts and then attaching straps he was able to fashion a pair of stilts each for himself and Leela. After an hour of practising, when Leela revealed herself as a natural stilt walker, they bade goodbye to the space crocodiles and set out over the swamp.

"Be very careful," warned the Doctor. "If you topple over you won't last five minutes."

"Look after yourself," laughed Leela. "Leela is an expert on kilts!"

"Just don't let a Scotsman hear you saying that."

They trudged for half an hour through the steaming swamp. The Doctor counted twelve skeletons for every fifty steps. As the land got drier and began to slope upward he counted even more. The Doctor found the going tough and thin rivulets of sweat formed on his cheeks and brow.

Suddenly they were free of the mist. Ahead of them a small mound marked the edge of the volcanic crater. They walked forward on their stilts, stopped at the rim of the crater and looked down. The magma at the centre of the crater was cold and hard. Stuck fast in the hardened lava, its damaged tail leaking deadly radioactive fuel, was a glistening spaceship. The Doctor mentally checked the design against the thousands of others he had encountered on his journeys through space and time.

"An Areelian self-generator," he said with respect, "those engines just keep pumping out energy. When it's not used up propelling the craft it can be deadly." Swaying precariously on his stilts he brought out a small black box from his pocket.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm going to blow up the engines. If, at the same time, I re-activate the volcano and this spacecraft is swallowed up—all the better."

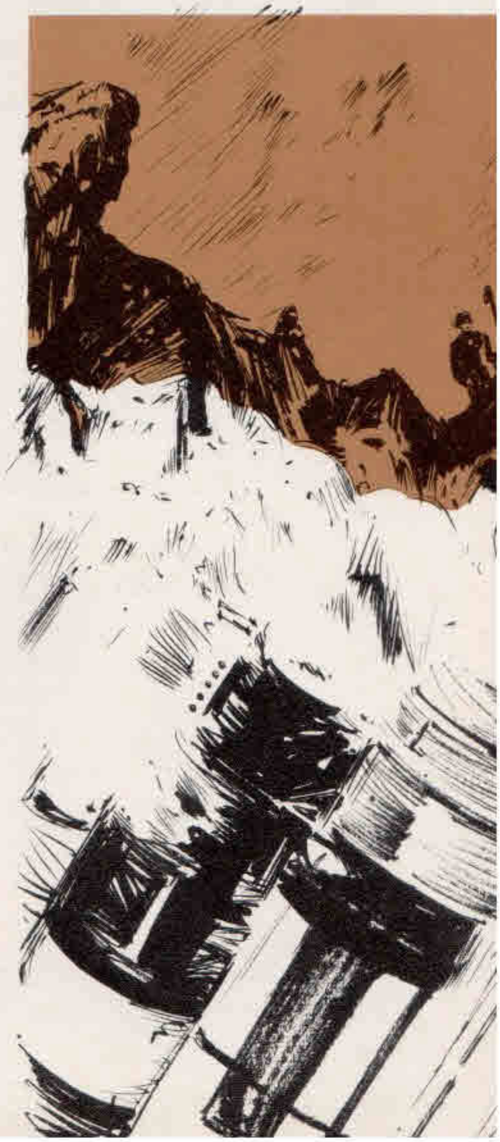
"But are you sure there's nobody left alive inside?"

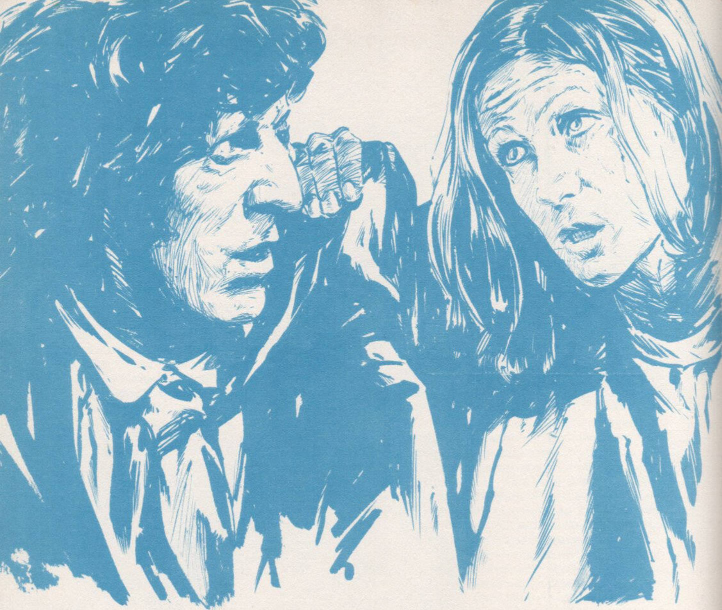
"Positive. Look how deep the nose is embedded in the magma. Anyway, this ship looks as though it's been here for a couple of hundred years."

"How long is that?"

"Depends on how you look at it really." The Doctor set the fuse on his explosives and tossed the package towards the ship. It clattered across the ground and came to rest under one of the stablising fins. "Time and space are relative, you see. An hour for a child waiting for his mother to come home with the Christmas presents is a long time, but I doubt the hour we have before that charge goes off will seem quite so drawn out. Come on, let's go."

They trekked back across the swamp. The Doctor was becoming increasingly tired and he began to wish he'd left more time to get clear. Although the hot lava from the volcano would not spread far if the charge set it off, the heat would be very uncomfortable while they were so close, and the blast might knock them down. The Doctor





hoped that once the volcano erupted the Areelian ship would be swallowed up for good. He lifted his weary legs and plodded on, the squelching sounds and his own heavy breathing the only things to be heard in the eerie, misty silence.

"Leela, when we get back, I'd like you to—" The Doctor never finished the sentence. His right stilt had hit a particularly soft piece of ground and just kept on sinking, causing him to lose his balance. With a mighty wrench he pulled it free, but was unable to place it upright. It skidded slowly across the spongy surface of the swamp as the Doctor did an unplanned and painful splits. There was a crack, the stilt broke about three feet from the end, and the Doctor was stranded in an undignified, leg twisting kneel, frantically waving his outstretched arms in small, fast circles in an attempt to maintain his balance. If he fell into the swamp he would die. The shorter stilt began sinking again and the Doctor toppled over to one side.

Leela caught him just in time. As it was, the Doctor's momentum almost knocked her over into the radioactive swamp. She pulled him upward until he was balancing on one stilt, drew her knife, then bent over and slashed the thongs that bound him to the broken stilt.

"Put your foot on mine." Leela's voice was urgent.

"Get out of here. We don't have enough time. The explosion is due any—"

"Put your foot on mine."

The Doctor did as he was told. Like two strange giant insects in a three-legged race they headed for the edge of the danger zone. The Doctor steadied himself with one arm round Leela's shoulders and marvelled at her strength and sense of balance. Once or twice he stumbled, but each time she was perfectly positioned to take his weight. By the time they neared the edge of the danger zone he was exhausted. He looked at his time-piece.

"Brace yourself," he gasped.

Leela stood firm and they waited.

The explosion, when it came, was muffled. There was a strong gust of wind carrying small particles of rock and metal. When the blast was over the Doctor looked over his shoulder. A dull orange glow told him the volcano had flared briefly back to life.

"It will be safe now?" Leela's eyes showed her concern.

"It should be. The engines won't work and whatever radiation might be left will be locked deep in the earth under hundreds of tons of rock."

"Good."

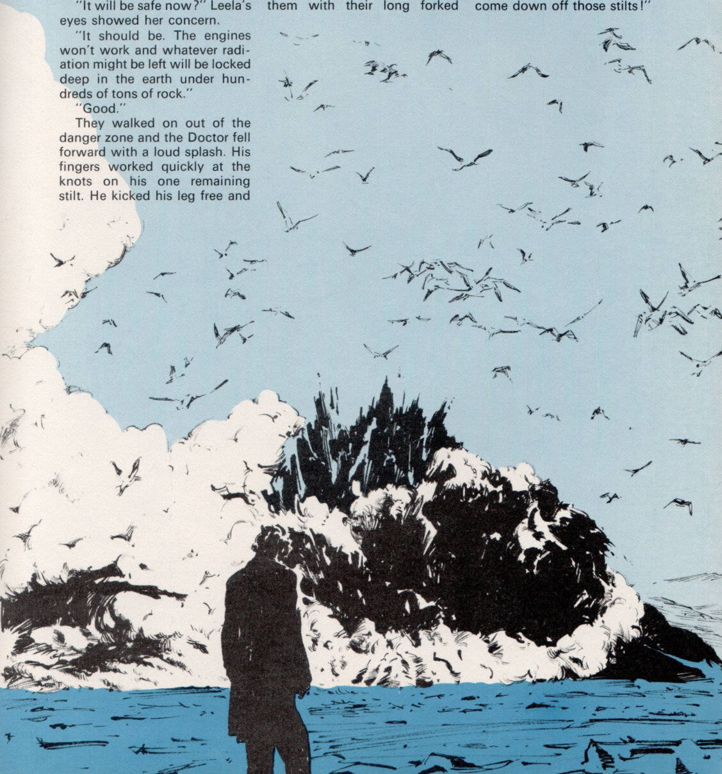
They walked on out of the danger zone and the Doctor fell forward with a loud splash. His fingers worked quickly at the knots on his one remaining stilt. He kicked his leg free and rose to his feet, staring down in disgust as his soaking clothes.

"Not again!"

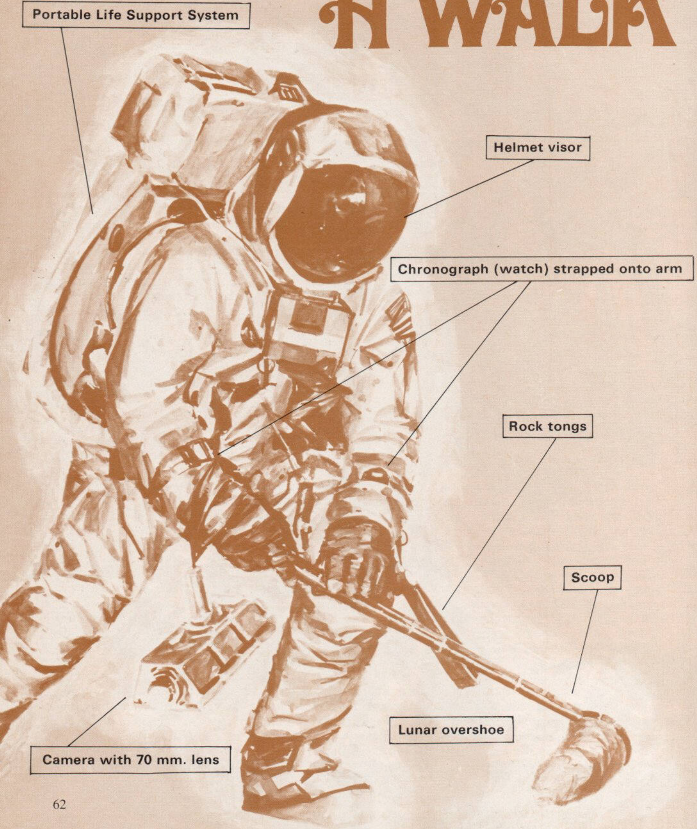
After the Doctor had changed he did his best, with the aid of the Image Intensifier, to reassure the space crocodiles that the danger was over. The feelings of thankfulness he received were very touching. He indicated that he and Leela had to leave, and after licking both of them with their long forked tongues, the crocodiles filed out of the Tardis, climbed on top of each other on a mound outside and lay waiting for the Tardis to disappear.

As the Tardis dematerialised and entered the trans-dimensional flux, the Doctor pulled out the chess set and put it confidently down on the table.

"Just time for a quick game, Leela—Leela! For pity's sake, come down off those stilts!"



DRESSED FOR A WALK


Portable Life Support System
Helmet visor
Chronograph (watch) strapped onto arm
Rock tongs
Scoop
Lunar overshoe
Camera with 70 mm. lens

When you're just setting out for a short walk—across the surface of the Moon—it's as well to make sure that you're properly dressed for the occasion. Here's how the pioneering astronauts of the historic Apollo missions protected themselves against all possible hazards.

No one can walk in space without a spacesuit. The Doctor, of course, has to be the exception which proves the rule—but as far as more conventional explorers are concerned, the space suit is vital.

It serves two main purposes. It supplies *oxygen*, and it also creates *pressure* around the wearer. Without this pressure, any astronaut who was foolish enough to venture outside his spaceship would meet a tragic end. His blood would quite literally boil.

The Apollo Moon landing spacesuits had to be particularly sophisticated, to be perfect for their very specific purpose. They had to be very sturdy indeed, and at the same time they had to be sufficiently flexible to allow their wearers to move with reasonable ease.

The outer layers of the suit were of aluminium, interleaved with coated nylon and Teflon fabric. Below this, next to the astronaut's body, was a cooling garment, which consisted of a network of tubes through which water circulated. This ensured that normal body temperatures were maintained.

The pressure helmet was made of plastic, and it locked securely into the suit at the neck. A coated visor provided protection against micro-meteoroids, thermal radiation, and ultra-violet and infra-red light. If the astronaut was thirsty he sipped water from a tube inside the helmet. As to the more delicate question of toilet facilities, these too were provided within the confines of the suit.

Each astronaut carried a glass fibre backpack known as the PLSS—Portable Life Support System. This supplied pressure at .26 kgf. per sq. cm., and it also supplied water to the cooling garment. Chemical filters ensured that the atmosphere inside the suit was constantly purified.

Special tools were designed for use on the expeditions, so that as much knowledge of the Moon as possible would be gained by sample collecting, photography, and general exploration.

Take a look at our artist's impression of the Apollo 15 'moon suit', and you'll see just how much thought must have gone into the design of this remarkable garment. Remember that it is was all that stood between those brave astronauts, and whatever dangers they might have had to face on the surface of the Moon.